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INTRODUCTION.

To give advice and to administer warnings to those who are in a position to accept or reject the advice, and in either event to reward the adviser for his presumption with personal castigation, is a thankless task, and it need cause no surprise that in an age when tales were eagerly listened to, when there was no literature, and when even courts depended for their amusement on ballads repeated by wandering bards, that a slave with a clear wit and sagacious mind should prefer to wrap up his pill of wisdom in a coating of allegory. Truth in the form of a story not only then, but now, often penetrates where the bare statement can find no entry; for, as L'Estrange says, "Some people are too proud, too surly, too impudent, too incorrigible, either to bear or to mend upon the liberty of plain dealing. Others are too big again, too powerful, too vindictive and dangerous for either reproof or counsel in direct terms." What else is the novel with a purpose, of which so much use has been made by those who have a reform to carry in our own days, but the fable of Æsop's time adapted to modern requirements. Those to whom Æsop and the other fabulists spoke may often have looked suspiciously enough at the narrators to catch the lurking insult which they must have felt behind the innocent words; but the advantage of a fable is that, while the person to whom it is addressed may accept the advice which it carries without loss of dignity, the adviser may get clear off under the ambiguity of his words! for

> "He that a fool doth very wisely hit
> Doth very foolishly, although he smart,
> Not to seem senseless of the bob: if not,
> The wise man's folly is anatomised,
> Even by the squandering glances of the fool,"

Addison, writing in the *Spectator*, has well summed up the advantage of fables. "There is nothing," he says, "which we receive with so much reluctance as advice. We look upon the man who gives it us as offering an affront to our understanding, and treating us like children or idiots. We consider the instruction as an implicit censure, and the zeal which anyone shows for our good on such an occasion as a piece of presumption or impertinence. The truth of it is, the person who pretends to advise does, in that particular, exercise a superiority over us, and can have no other reason for it but that, in comparing us with himself, he thinks us defective, either in our conduct or our understanding. For these reasons there is nothing so difficult as the art of making advice agreeable; and, indeed, all the writers, both ancient and modern, have distinguished themselves among one another according to the perfection at which they have arrived in this art. How many devices have been made use of to render this bitter potion palatable? Some convey their instructions to us in the best chosen words, others in the most harmonious numbers, some in points of wit, and others in short proverbs.

"But among all the difficult ways of giving counsel, I think the finest, and that which pleases the most universally, is Fable, in whatsoever shape it appears. If we consider this way of instructing or giving advice, it excels all others, because it is the least shocking, and the least subject to those exceptions which I have before mentioned.

"This will appear to us if we reflect, in the first place, that upon the reading of a fable we are made to believe we advise ourselves. We excuse the author for the sake of the story, and consider the precepts rather as our own conclusions than his instructions. The moral insinuates itself imperceptibly; we are taught by surprise, and become wiser and better unawares. In short, by this method a man is so far overreached as to think he is directing himself, while he is following the dictates of another, and consequently is not sensible of that which is the most unpleasing circumstance in advice.

"In the next place, if we look into human nature, we shall find that the mind is never so much pleased as when she exerts herself in any action that gives her an idea of her own perfection and abilities. This natural pride and ambition of the soul is very much gratified in the reading of a fable; for in writings of this kind, the reader comes in for half the performance; everything appears to him like a discovery of his own; he is busied all the while in applying characters and circumstances, and is in this respect both a reader and a composer. It is no wonder, therefore, that on such occasions, when the mind is thus pleased with itself, and amused with its own discoveries, that it is highly delighted with the writing which is the occasion of it."

It was not only among the Greeks that the Fable was in such high repute. The literature of all countries abounds with instances of its use. Holy-writ itself is not without examples. When the Israelites, slighting the claim of Jotham, appointed Abimelech to reign over them, Jotham addressed to them the following fable :—

"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, 'Reign thou over us.' But the olive tree said unto them, 'Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' And the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come thou, and reign over us.' But the fig tree said unto them, 'Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?' Then said the trees unto the vine, 'Come thou, and reign over us.' And the vine said unto them, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' Then said all the trees unto the bramble, 'Come thou, and reign over us.' And the bramble said unto the trees, 'If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'"

But perhaps the most famous instance of the fable rather than the direct rebuke being used to convict a man of his wrong-doing is that recorded in the Book of Samuel, when

Nathan, sent by the Lord to reprove David for his conduct to Uriah the Hittite, brought him to a sense of his iniquitous conduct by relating the story of the ewe lamb:—

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

"And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, as the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man."

Were any apology required for the use of apologue on the part of the monitor, the testimony of the New Testament to the constant practice of Our Saviour himself, of adapting his teaching to the understanding of his audience, by investing his meaning in a clothing of parable, would be ample justification.

History affords many instances of the use of fables for political purposes. When the citizens of Rome, driven to despair by the burden of the taxation put upon them to support the army, left the city in a body, and declared their determination to pay no more taxes, Menenius Agrippa was sent by the Senate to reason with them. He related to them the fable of the Belly and the Members, applying it to the different branches of the body-politic.

Demosthenes was enabled to bring the Athenians to an understanding of the grave dangers that would ensue from delivering up their statesmen on the demand of Philip of

Macedon, by relating to them the fable of the Wolves and the Sheep.

The fable of the Horse and the Stag was recited by Stesichorus to the citizens of Himera, as a warning to them against placing too great power in the hands of their ruler, Phalaris.

Æsop himself, when about to be put to death by the citizens of Delphi, to warn them that the outrage would not pass unavenged, related to them the story of the Beetle and the Eagle :—

A Hare that was hard put to it by an Eagle, took sanctuary in a ditch with a Beetle. The Beetle interceded for the Hare; the Eagle slapt off the former, and devoured the latter. The Beetle took this for an affront to hospitality as well as to herself, and so meditated a revenge, watched the Eagle up to her nest, followed her and took her time when the Eagle was abroad, and so made shift to roll out the eggs and destroy the brood. The Eagle, upon this disappointment, built a great deal higher next bout; the Beetle watched her still, and shewed her the same trick once again. Whereupon the Eagle made her appeal to Jupiter, who gave her leave to lay her next course of eggs in his own lap. But the Beetle found out a way to make Jupiter rise from his throne; so that, upon the loosening of his mantle, the eggs fell from him unawares, and the Eagle was a third time defeated. Jupiter stomached the indignity; but upon hearing the cause, he found the Eagle to be aggressor, and so acquitted the Beetle.

The fashion of endowing the animals with human speech and reason, which forms so prominent a feature in Æsop's Fables, is one that is common to all primitive races. In the legends of Australia, Africa, India, and America, the beasts, birds, and fishes are endowed with all the qualities of human beings: they are the friends and protectors of men, assist them when they are in difficulties, and advise them when in doubt.

In the Fables of Æsop little attempt was made to endow the animals with individual characteristics. As a rule, all Wolves are overbearing bullies, all Foxes sly schemers, but occasionally we find differences of disposition among the same races of animals, as the selfish tyrannical Lion, who claims for himself the whole of the spoils of the hunt, by virtue of his strength, and the generous Lion, who made a useful friend for himself in the Mouse, whose life he spared. Nor is there, of course, much individuality in the speech of the animals. In Boswell's *Life of Johnson* there is a conversation dealing with this point which we will quote.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds," says Boswell, "was in company with them one day, when Goldsmith said that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. 'For instance,' said he, 'the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill,' continued he, 'consists in making them talk like little fishes.' While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie, he observed Johnson shaking his sides and laughing, upon which he smartly proceeded, 'Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like *whales*.'"

Whether Æsop was or was not the author of all the Fables collected under his name is not a question to which we need apply any very anxious consideration. That he collected or wrote down the Fables which he invented from time to time, to serve the requirements of the moment, is certainly not probable. He spoke them by word of mouth on important occasions, when they would be caught up and repeated by the auditors. Those who had heard them no doubt applied the Fables to other occasions bearing more or less similarity to that on which they were uttered. One generation would hand them on to another, adding in course of time new fables to the old. Within recent times there has been discovered in a convent on Mount Athos a manuscript book of Fables in Greek verse by Babrius, a writer who flourished some seven hundred years later than Æsop. The discovery of this collection, which includes many of the Fables attributed to Æsop, has led some learned writers to maintain that to Babrius is due the authorship of all the Fables; but the reputation of Æsop as a fabulist long before the time of Babrius is evidence in contradiction of this theory, which it would be difficult to demolish. The fact would seem to be, that to Babrius is due the credit of collecting the fables current in his time, and adding to their popularity and ensuring their preservation by turning them into verse.

The source from which the materials have been drawn which go to form the popular conception of Æsop's life and appearance is the life of him written by Planudes, a monk of the fourteenth century, which is, however, a collection of absurd stories, from various sources, to which no credit can be given.

The facts of his career, as they are now generally accepted, are briefly as follows:—

Born a slave, Æsop lived for many years in the service of Iadmon of Sàmos, in the regulation of whose affairs he first learnt to exercise the natural tact and shrewdness which in after-life served him in such good stead. In the solution of domestic problems, and afterwards of civic difficulties, for his master, Æsop no doubt early discovered the advantage to one in his position of wrapping up an unpalatable truth in a more acceptable allegory, and of allowing his master to reap the credit for acts of which he was the instigator. Indeed, the position in which Iadmon stood to Æsop brings to mind the relative position of two of the characters in Dickens' *Bleak House*—Mr and Mrs Matthew Bagnet. "George," says Mr Bagnet, "you know me. It's my old girl that advises; she has the head. But I never own to it before her. Discipline must be maintained."

The sagacity of Æsop, however, was of too exceptional a character to remain long concealed in the domestic circle; and so high grew the public reputation of the slave that at length Iadmon was reluctantly compelled to give him his freedom. As a freeman Æsop was for a time employed by the Samians to assist them in their public affairs; and when Crœsus, the great King of Lydia, sent ambassadors to treat with them on a matter of tribute, it was due to Æsop's advice that an attempt to overreach the Samians was defeated. It was no doubt from these ambassadors that Crœsus heard the fame of Æsop, and their testimony to his extraordinary sagacity and keen-wittedness, which led the King to invite Æsop to take up his residence at Sardis. Accordingly, at Sardis, under the protection of Crœsus, Æsop took up his residence about the year 570 B.C. Here all the lessons of prudence and discretion which he had learnt in the service of Iadmon and the Samians were necessary to maintain a position in a court to which Crœsus welcomed all that was best and wisest in Greece, in a time when Greece numbered among her sons some of the wisest philosophers that the world has known. A delicate perception of the susceptibilities of the human mind led him to frame his advice to the King in such a flattering form that in contrast the same advice offered by other sages, without the courtly gloze of the Phrygian, appeared so rough and unpalatable as to cause the King nothing but irritation. Æsop soon proved that he was worthy of the reputation that had preceded him. Crœsus employed him in many offices of State, and despatched him on various missions to the cities and states of Greece, and it was in the course of negotiation to which some of these missions gave rise that many of his more famous fables were delivered. During the journeys which he undertook in connection with these various embassies, he was enabled to visit the schools of many of the Greek philosophers.

It was on the occasion of a mission to Delphi, on which he was sent by Crœsus, to distribute certain payments, that Æsop met his death. The citizens, taking in ill-part some strictures which he had passed on their conduct, and driven to exasperation by his refusal to distribute the funds of which he was custodian, proceeded to fabricate evidence to support a charge of sacrilege against him. Alarmed probably by the danger to the reputation of their city and its temple from the polished wit and pointed satire of their visitor should he escape from their hands, the judges accepted the evidence of his malicious enemies, and condemned him to death. Æsop appealed in vain to their sense of the sacred duties of hospitality, and to their fears of the vengeance that should follow such an outrage of its laws, in the fable of the Beetle and the Eagle; but this time his expedient failed of its effect, and, unmoved by his eloquence, they proceeded to carry out the sentence, and hurled him from a precipice outside the city walls.

'Æsop's blood' thereafter, to become a proverbial testimony to the vengeance following murder, did not appeal to heaven in vain. A visitation of pestilence and other disasters befalling them soon after Æsop's death, brought the citizens of Delphi to a sense of the outrage they had committed. By a self-imposed fine paid to a descendant of Iadmon, Æsop's old master, they sought to atone for the crime, and stay the hand of the avenging deities.

Of Æsop's personal appearance, the long-prevalent conception which depicted him as a hideous dwarf, flat-nosed, hunchbacked, and bandy-legged, is a false portrait, due to the imaginings of Planudes and his contemporaries, for which there is not the slightest warrant in classical literature. Bentley, who expended considerable research on the point, has even gone so far as to declare that he was remarkable for his beauty. A statue of him, chiselled by Lysippus, was erected in Athens two hundred years after his death.

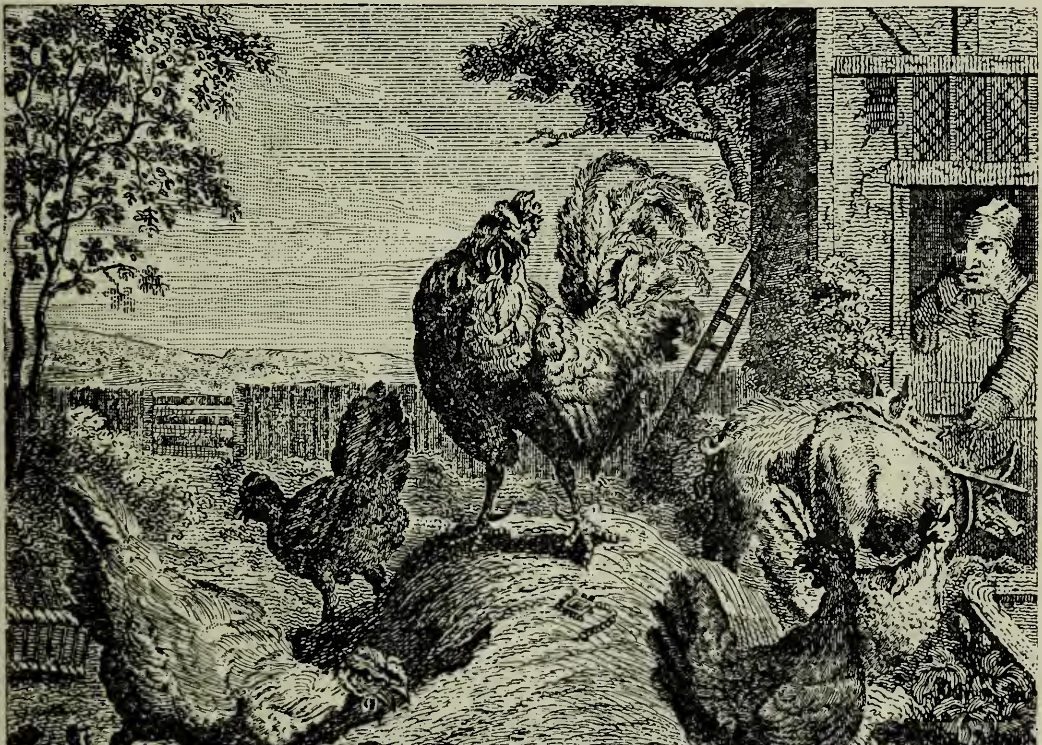
Since, in the year 1484, was printed "The Subtyl Historyes and Fables of Esope. Translated into Englysshe by William Caxton," there has been no lack, either in prose or verse, of English versions of the Fables. In the early part of the eighteenth century especially they were found a convenient vehicle for party-writers, to convey their denunciation of their opponents. The celebrated edition of Sir Roger L'Estrange, a Jacobite, noted as a political pamphleteer, was first published in 1692–4, and his Reflections on the Fables reflected also in dry homely phrase his detestation of the principles of his opponents. Dr Samuel Croxall, a Whig clergyman, Archdeacon of Salop, published in 1722 his version of the Fables, with applications bearing also the mark of his political and theological bias.

In the present edition the text of the Fables follows that of Croxall; but in place of some of the long, dull, and far-fetched applications, it has been thought well to append short passages from good writers, bearing some affinity to the moral of the fable.

ÆSOP'S FABLES.

FABLE I.

THE COCK AND THE JEWEL.



A BRISK young Cock, in company with two or three pullets, his mistresses, raking upon a dunghill for something to entertain them with, happened to scratch up a Jewel. He knew what it was well enough, for it sparkled with an exceeding bright lustre; but, not knowing what to do with it, endeavoured

A

to cover his ignorance under a gay contempt: so, shrugging up his wings, shaking his head, and putting on a grimace, he expressed himself to this purpose:—"Indeed, you are a very fine thing; but I know not any business you have here. I make no scruple of declaring that my taste lies quite another way; and I had rather have one grain of dear delicious barley than all the jewels under the sun."

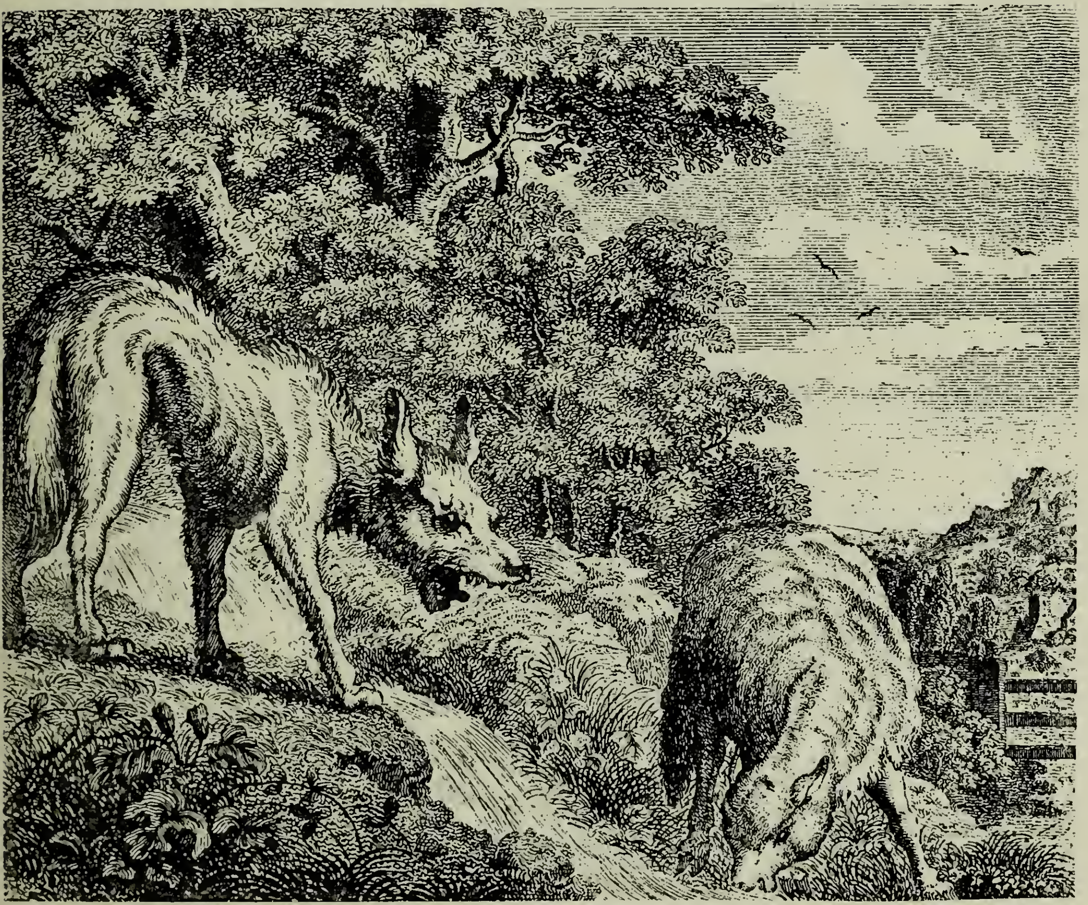
Diamond me no diamonds! prize me no prizes!

"People speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses and lands, and food and raiment, were alone useful, and as if Sight, Thought, and Admiration were all profitless, so that men insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables; men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life, and the raiment than the body; who look to the earth as a stable, and to its fruit as fodder; vine-dressers and husbandmen who love the corn they grind, and the grapes they crush, better than the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden; hewers of wood and drawers of water, who think that it is to give them wood to hew and water to draw, that the pine-forests cover the mountain like the shadow of God, and the great rivers move like His Eternity."—JOHN RUSKIN: *Modern Painters.*

FABLE II.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

ONE hot, sultry day, a Wolf and a Lamb happened to come, just at the same time, to quench their thirst in the stream of a clear silver brook, that ran tumbling down the side of a rocky mountain. The Wolf stood upon the higher ground, and the Lamb at some distance from him down the current. However, the Wolf, having a mind to pick a quarrel with him, asked him, what he meant by disturbing the water, and making it so muddy that he could not drink; and, at the same time, demanded satisfaction. The Lamb, frightened at this



threatening charge, told him, in a tone as mild as possible, that, with humble submission, he could not conceive how that could be; since the water which he drank, ran down from the Wolf to him, and therefore it could not be disturbed so far up the stream. "Be that as it will," replies the Wolf, "you are a rascal, and I have been told that you treated me with ill language behind my back, about half a year ago."—"Upon my word," says the Lamb, "the time you mention was before I was born." The Wolf, finding it to no purpose to argue any longer against truth, fell into a great passion, snarling and foaming at the mouth, as if he had been mad; and drawing nearer to the Lamb, "Sirrah," says he, "if it was not you, it was your father, and that is all one."—So he seized the poor, innocent, helpless thing, tore it to pieces, and made a meal of it.

'Tis an easy matter to find a staff to beat a dog.

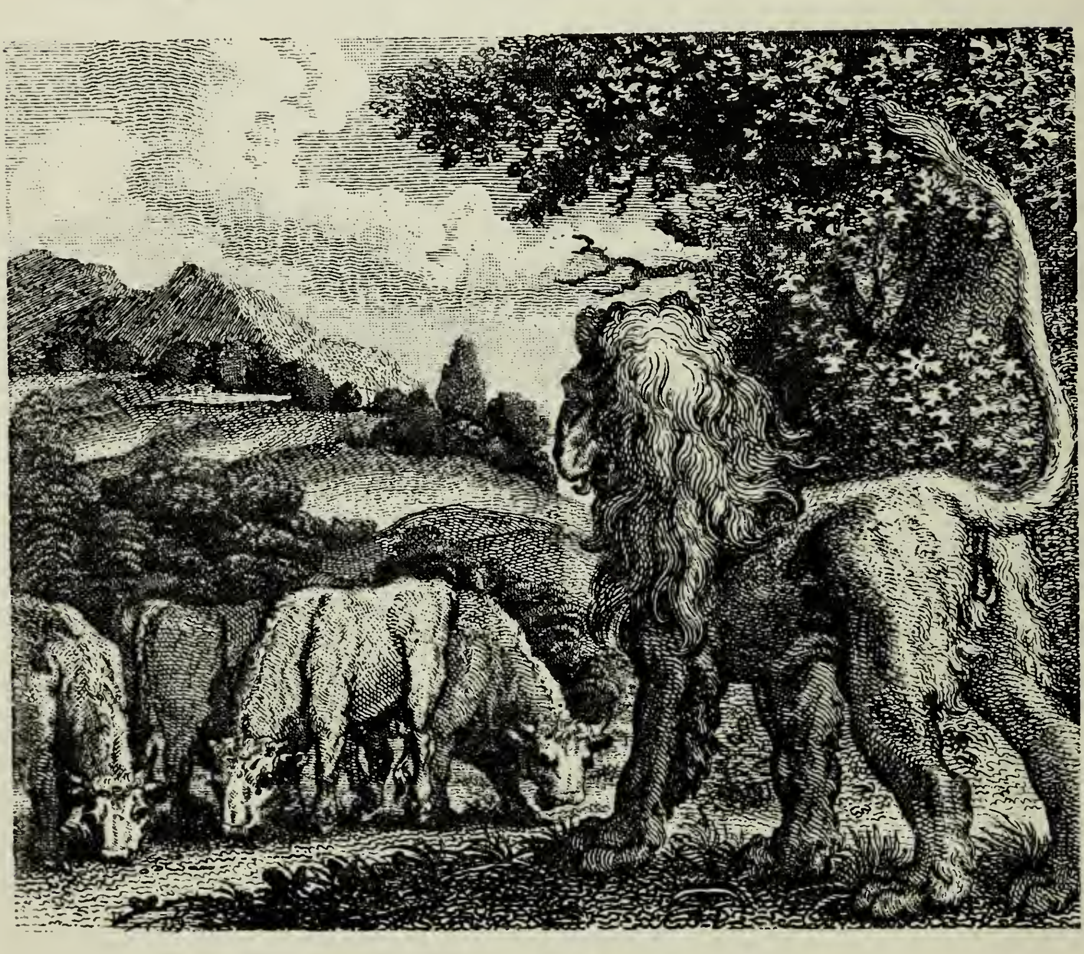
"When innocence is to be oppressed by might," says L'Estrange, "arguments are foolish things; nay, the very merits, virtues, and good offices of the person accused, are improved to his condemnation." In the notorious "Bloody Assizes" of 1685, when the brutal Chief-Justice Jeffreys tried the prisoners on the Western Circuit after the collapse of Monmouth, neither innocence nor pity restrained the fury of the judge. In Macaulay's vivid account of the assize, Jeffreys' way of dealing with his victims is thus described. "The Chief-Justice was all himself. His spirits rose higher and higher as the work went on. He laughed, shouted, joked, and swore in such a way that many thought him drunk from morning to night. But in him it was not easy to distinguish the madness produced by evil passions from the madness produced by brandy. A prisoner affirmed that the witnesses who appeared against him were not entitled to credit. One of them, he said, was a Papist, and another a prostitute. 'Thou impudent rebel,' exclaimed the judge, 'to reflect on the King's evidence! I see thee, villain, I see thee already with the halter round thy neck.' Another produced testimony that he was a good Protestant. 'Protestant!' said Jeffreys; 'you mean Presbyterian, I'll hold you a wager of it. I can smell a Presbyterian forty miles.' One wretched man moved the pity even of bitter

Tories. ‘My lord,’ they said, ‘this poor creature is on the parish.’ ‘Do not trouble yourselves,’ said the judge, ‘I will ease the parish of the burden.’ It was not only against the prisoners that his fury broke forth. Gentlemen and noblemen of high consideration and stainless loyalty, who ventured to bring to his notice any extenuating circumstances, were almost sure to receive what he called, in the coarse dialect which he had learned in the pothouses of Whitechapel, a lick with the rough side of his tongue. . . . Jeffreys boasted that he had hanged more traitors than all his predecessors together since the Conquest. It is certain that the number of persons whom he put to death in one month, and in one shire, very much exceeded the number of all the political offenders who have been put to death in our island since the Revolution.”

FABLE III.

The Lion and the Four Bulls.

Four Bulls, which had entered into a very strict friendship, kept always near one another, and fed together. The Lion often saw them, and as often had a mind to make one of them his prey; but, though he could easily have subdued any of them singly, yet he was afraid to attack the whole alliance, as knowing they would have been too hard for him, and therefore contented himself, for the present, with keeping at a distance. At last, perceiving no attempt was to be made upon them as long as this combination held, he took occasion, by whispers



and hints, to foment jealousies, and raise divisions among them. This stratagem succeeded so well, that the Bulls grew cold and reserved towards one another, which soon after ripened into a downright hatred and aversion; and, at last, ended in a total separation. The Lion had now obtained his ends; and, as impossible as it was for him to hurt them while they were united, he found no difficulty, now they were parted, to seize and devour every Bull of them, one after another.

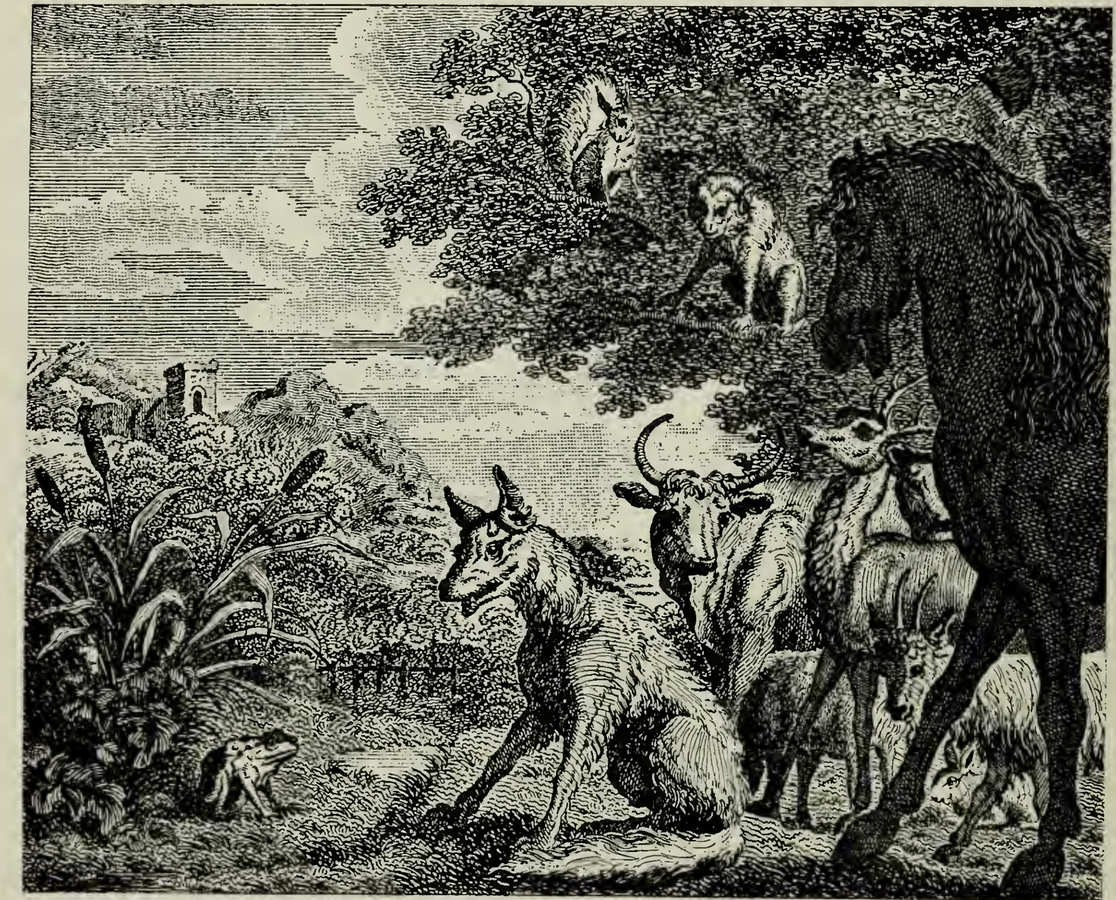
A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

"Though the quickness of thine ear were able to reach the noise of the moon, which some think it maketh in its rapid revolution; though the number of thy ears should equal Argus's eyes; yet stop them all with the wise man's wax, and be deaf unto the suggestions of talebearers, calumniators, pickthank or malevolent delators, who, while quiet men sleep, sowing the tares of discord and division, distract the tranquillity of charity and all friendly society. These are the tongues that set the world on fire, cankers of reputation, and like that of Jonas's gourd, wither a good name in a night."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

FABLE IV.

THE FROG AND THE FOX.

A FROG, leaping out of the lake, and taking the advantage of a rising ground, made proclamation to all the beasts of the forest, that he was an able physician, and, for curing all manner



of distempers, would turn his back to no person living. This discourse, uttered in a parcel of hard, cramp words, which nobody understood, made the beasts admire his learning, and give credit to every thing he said. At last the Fox, who was present, with indignation asked him, how he could have the impudence with those thin lantern-jaws, that meagre pale phiz, and blotched, spotted body, to set up for one who was able to cure the infirmities of others.

Physician, heal thyself.

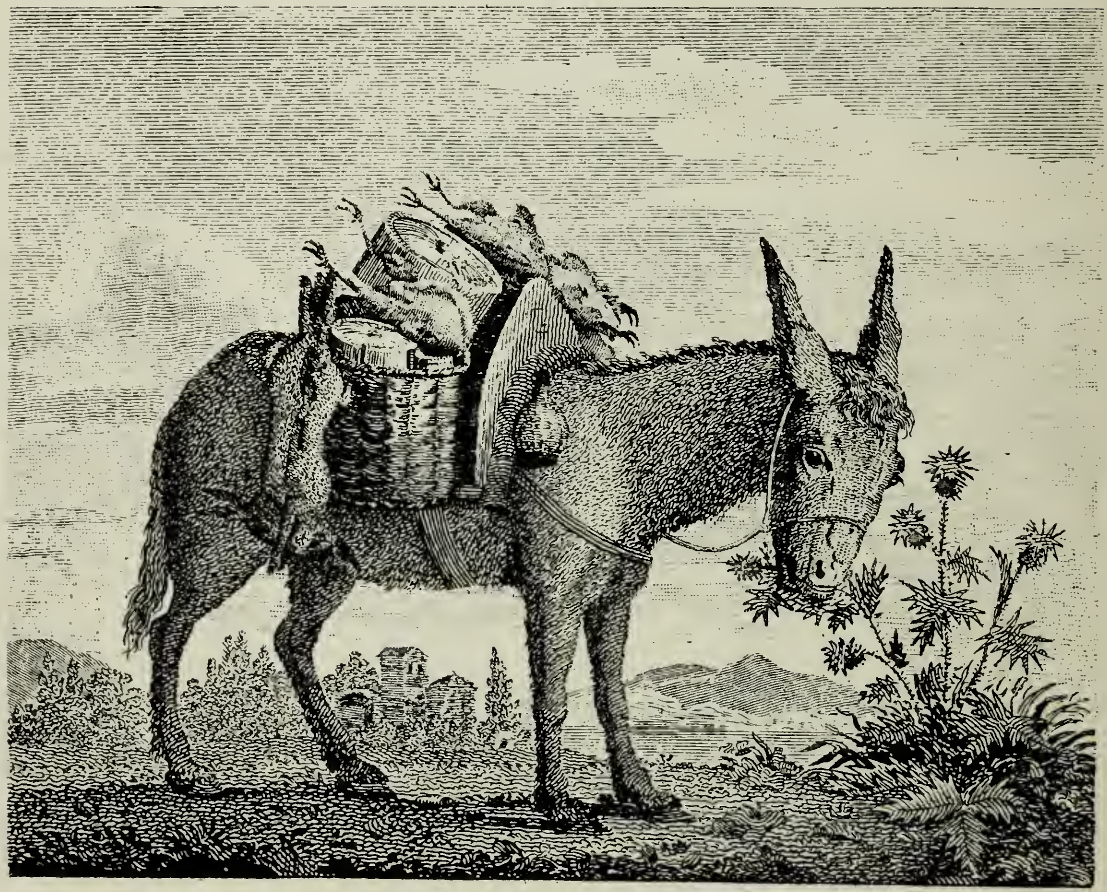
"*Jaques.* . . . . I must have liberty
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please; for so fools have;
And they that are most galled with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
The 'why' is plain as way to parish church:
He that a fool doth very wisely hit
Doth very foolishly, although he smart,
Not to seem senseless of the bob: if not,
The wise man's folly is anatomized
Even by the squandering glances of the fool.
Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.
Duke, senior. Fie on thee! I can tell what thou would'st do.
Jaques. What, for a counter, would I do but good?
Duke, senior. Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin:
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
As sensual as the brutish sting itself;
And all the embossed sores and headed evils,
That thou with license of free foot hast caught,
Would'st thou disgorge into the general world."

As You Like It, Act II. Sc. vii.

FABLE V.

THE ASS EATING THISTLES.

AN Ass was loaded with good provisions of several sorts, which, in time of harvest, he was carrying into the field for his master and the reapers to dine upon. By the way he met with a fine large Thistle, and, being very hungry, began to mumble it; which, while he was doing, he entered into this reflection—"How many greedy epicures would think themselves happy, amidst such a variety of delicate viands as I now carry! But to me, this bitter prickly Thistle is more savoury and relishing than the most exquisite and sumptuous banquet."



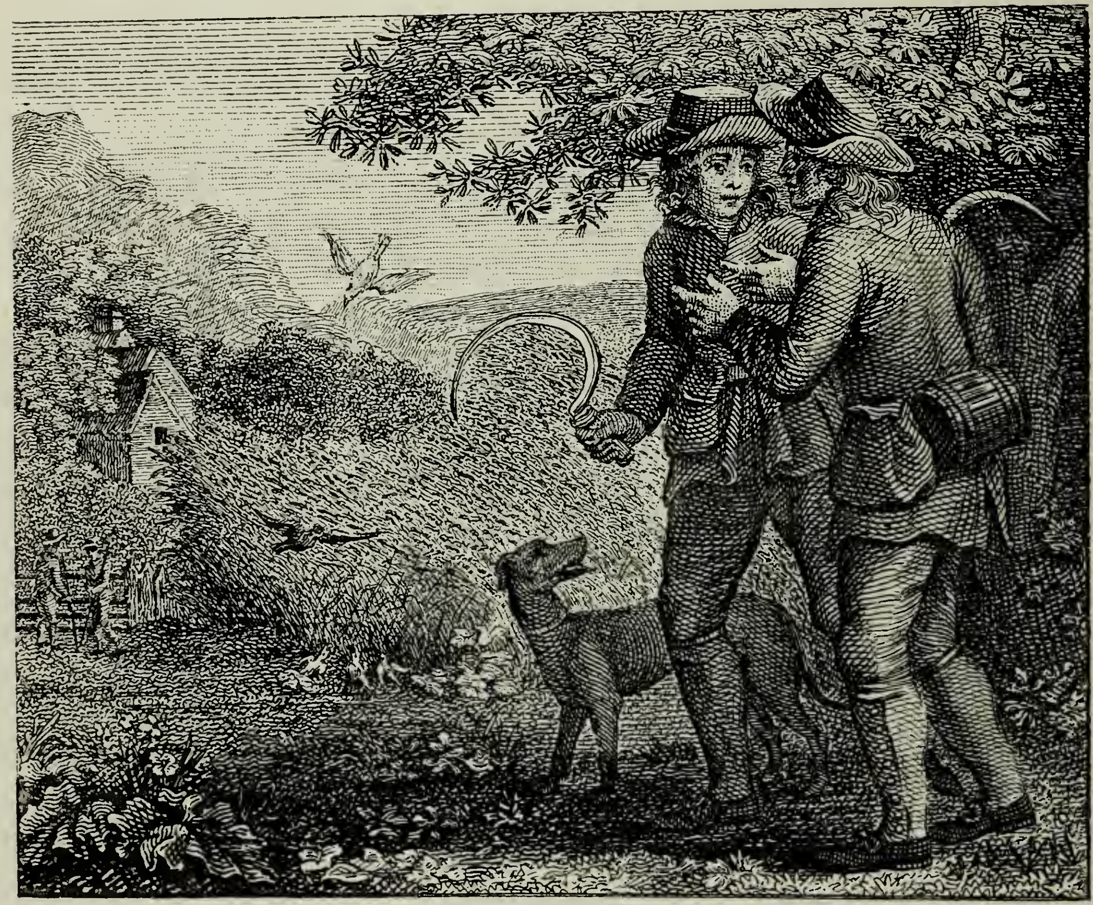
One man's food is another man's poison.

"The luxurious emperors of old inconsiderately sated themselves with the dainties of sea and land, till, wearied through all varieties, their reflections became a study unto them, and they were fain to feed by invention: novices in true epicurism! which, by mediocrity, paucity, quick and healthful appetite, makes delight smartly acceptable; whereby Epicurus himself found Jupiter's brain in a piece of Cytheridian cheese, and the tongues of nightingales in a dish of onions. Hereby healthful and temperate poverty hath the start of nauseating luxury; unto whose clear and naked appetite every meal is a feast, and in one single dish the first course of Metellus; who are cheaply hungry, and never lose their hunger, or advantage of a craving appetite, because obvious food contents it; while Nero, half-famished, could not feed upon a piece of bread, and, lingering after his snowed water, hardly got down an ordinary cup of Calda. By such circumscriptions of pleasure the contemned philosophers reserved unto themselves the secret of delight, which the heluos of those days lost in their exorbitances. In vain we study delight; it is at the command of every sober mind, and in every sense born with us; but nature, who teacheth us the rule of pleasure, instructeth also in the bounds thereof, and where its line expireth. And, therefore, temperate minds, not pressing their pleasures until the sting appeareth, enjoy their contentations contentedly, and without regret, and so escape the folly of excess, to be pleased unto displacency."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Christian Morals.*

FABLE VI.

THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES.

A LARK, who had Young Ones in a field of corn which was almost ripe, was under some fear lest the reapers should come to reap it before her young brood were fledged, and able to remove from the place: wherefore, upon flying abroad to look for food, she left this charge with them—that they should take notice what they heard talked of in her absence, and tell her of it when she came back again. When she was gone, they heard the owner of the corn call to his son —"Well," says he, "I think this corn is ripe enough; I would



have you go early to-morrow, and desire our friends and neighbours to come and help us to reap it." When the Old Lark came home, the Young Ones fell a quivering and chirping round her, and told her what had happened, begging her to remove them as fast as she could. The mother bid them be easy ; " for," says she, " if the owner depends upon friends and neighbours, I am pretty sure the corn will not be reaped to-morrow." Next day she went out again, upon the same occasion, and left the same orders with them as before. The owner came, and stayed, expecting those he had sent to ; but the sun grew hot, and nothing was done, for not a soul came to help him. " Then," says he to his son, " I perceive these friends of ours are not to be depended upon ; so that you must even go to your uncles and cousins, and tell them, I desire they would be here betimes to-morrow morning to help us to reap." Well, this the Young Ones, in a great fright, reported also to their mother. " If that be all," says she, " do not be frightened, children, for kindred and relations do not use to be so very forward to serve one another : but take particular notice what you hear said the next time, and be sure you let me know it." She went abroad the next day, as usual ; and the owner, finding his relations as slack as the rest of his neighbours, said to his son, " Harkye, George, do you get a couple of good sickles ready against to-morrow morning, and we will even reap the corn ourselves." When the Young Ones told their mother this, " Then," says she, " we must be gone indeed ; for, when a man undertakes to do his business himself, it is not so likely that he will be disappointed." So she removed her Young Ones immediately, and the corn was reaped the next day by the good man and his son.

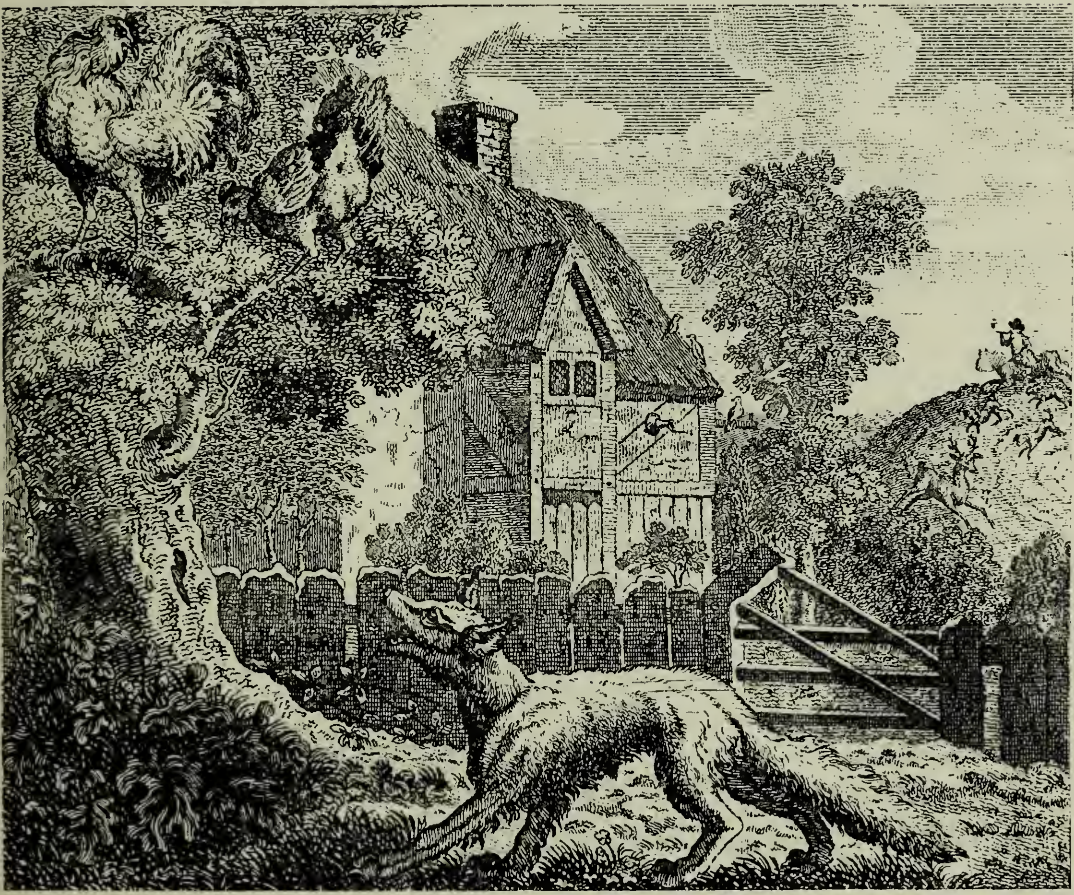
He that would be sure to have his business well done, must do it himself.

" Never depend upon the assistance of friends and relations in any thing which you are able to do yourself ; for nothing is more fickle and uncertain. The man who relies upon another for the execution of any affair of importance, is not only kept in a wretched and slavish suspense while he expects the issue of the matter, but generally meets with a disappointment. While he, who lays the chief stress of his business upon himself, and depends upon his own industry and attention for the success of his affairs, is in the fairest way to attain his end: and, if at last he should miscarry, has this to comfort him—that it was not through his own negligence, and a vain expectation of the assistance of friends. To stand by ourselves, as much as possible, to exert our own strength and vigilance in the prosecution of our affairs, is godlike, being the result of a most noble and highly exalted reason; but they who procrastinate and defer the business of life by an idle dependence upon others, in things which it is in their own power to effect, sink down into a kind of stupid abject slavery, and shew themselves unworthy of the talents with which human nature is dignified."—S. CROXALL.

FABLE VII.

THE COCK AND THE FOX.

THE Fox, passing early one summer's morning near a farm-yard, was caught in a springe, which the farmer had planted there for that end. The Cock, at a distance, saw what happened; and, hardly yet daring to trust himself too near so dangerous a foe, approached him cautiously, and peeped at him, not without some horror and dread of mind. Reynard no sooner perceived it, but he addressed himself to him, with all the designing artifice imaginable. "Dear Cousin," says he, "you see what an unfortunate accident has befallen me



here, and all upon your account: for, as I was creeping through yonder hedge, in my way homeward, I heard you crow, and was resolved to ask you how you did before I went any further: but, by the way, I met with this disaster; and therefore now I must become a humble suitor to you for a knife to cut this plaguy string; or, at least, that you would conceal my misfortune, till I have gnawed it asunder with my teeth." The Cock, seeing how the case stood, made no reply, but posted away as fast as he could, and gave the farmer an account of the whole matter; who, taking a good weapon along with him, came and did the Fox's business, before he could have time to contrive his escape.

There is a great difference between a cunning man and a wise one.

This is an old trick of the Fox's that has served many times. Fortunately the Cock was a shrewd fellow, and did not allow pity to override reason or flattery to destroy caution. Too often rogues, with the experience of human nature which is their chief stock-in-trade, will draw to themselves that compassion which the deserving are unable to excite, and, like Autolycus in the following scene from *The Winter's Tale*, pick our pockets while we are listening to their tale of distress:—

"*Aut.* O that ever I was born! [*Grovelling on the ground.*

Clown. I' the name of me——

Aut. O, help me, help me! pluck but off these rags; and then death, death!

Clown. Alack, poor soul! thou hast need of more rags to lay on thee, rather than have these off.

Aut. O sir, the loathsomeness of them offends me more than the stripes I have received, which are mighty ones and millions.

Clown. Alas, poor man! a million of beating may come to a great matter.

Aut. I am robbed, sir, and beaten; my money and apparel ta'en from me, and these detestable things put upon me.

Clown. What, by a horseman, or a footman?

Aut. A footman, sweet sir, a footman.

Clown. Indeed, he should be a footman by the garments he has left with thee: if this be a horseman's coat, it hath seen very hot service. Lend me thy hand. I'll help thee: come, lend me thy hand.

Aut. O, good sir, tenderly, O!

Clown. Alas, poor soul!

Aut. O, good sir, softly, good sir! I fear, sir, my shoulder-blade is out.

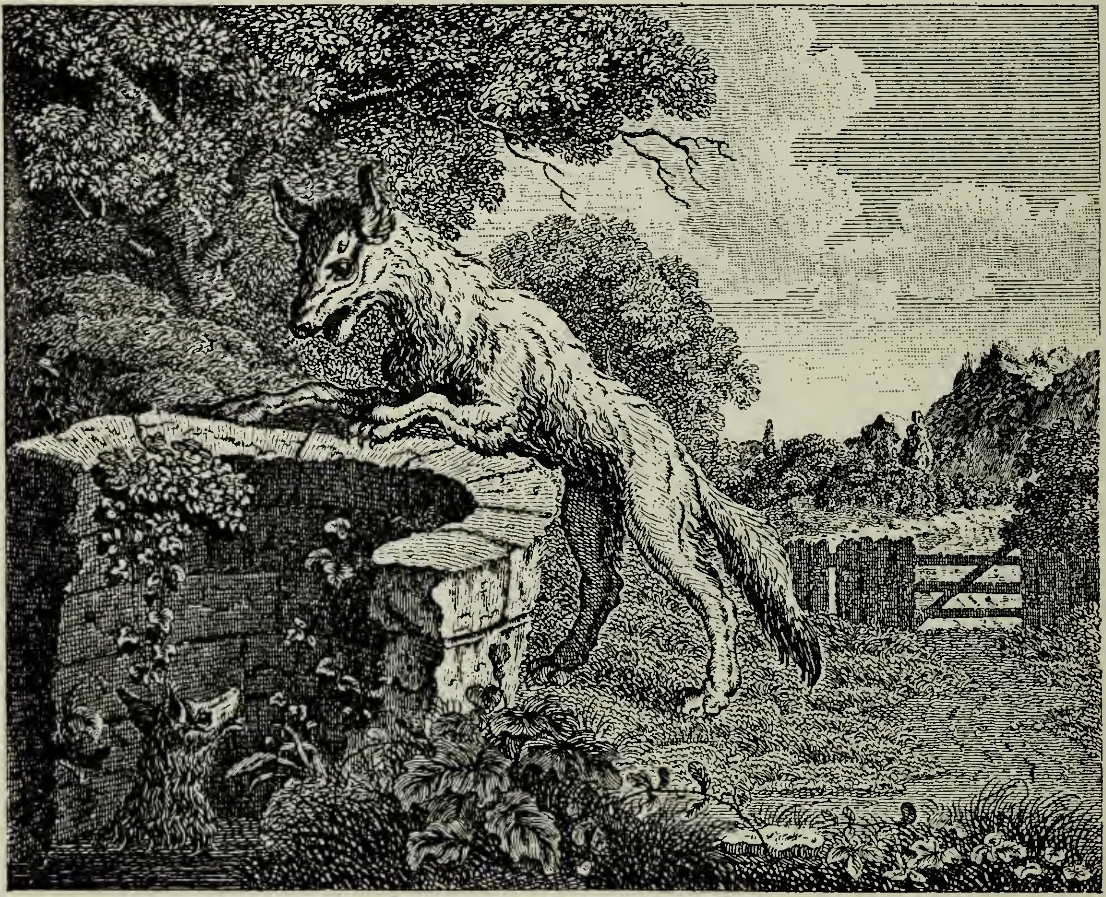
Clown. How now! canst stand?

Aut. [*Picking his pocket.*] Softly, dear sir; good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office."

FABLE VIII.

THE FOX IN THE WELL.

A FOX, having fallen into a well, made a shift, by sticking his claws into the sides, to keep his head above water. Soon after, a Wolf came and peeped over the brink; to whom the Fox applied himself very earnestly for assistance; entreating that he would help him to a rope, or something of that kind, which might favour his escape. The Wolf, moved with compassion at his misfortune, could not forbear expressing his concern: "Ah! poor Reynard," says he, "I am sorry for you with all my heart; how could you possibly come into this



melancholy condition?"—"Nay, pr'ythee, friend," replies the Fox, "if you wish me well, do not stand pitying of me, but lend me some succour as fast as you can: for pity is but cold comfort when one is up to the chin in water, and within a hair's breadth of starving or drowning."

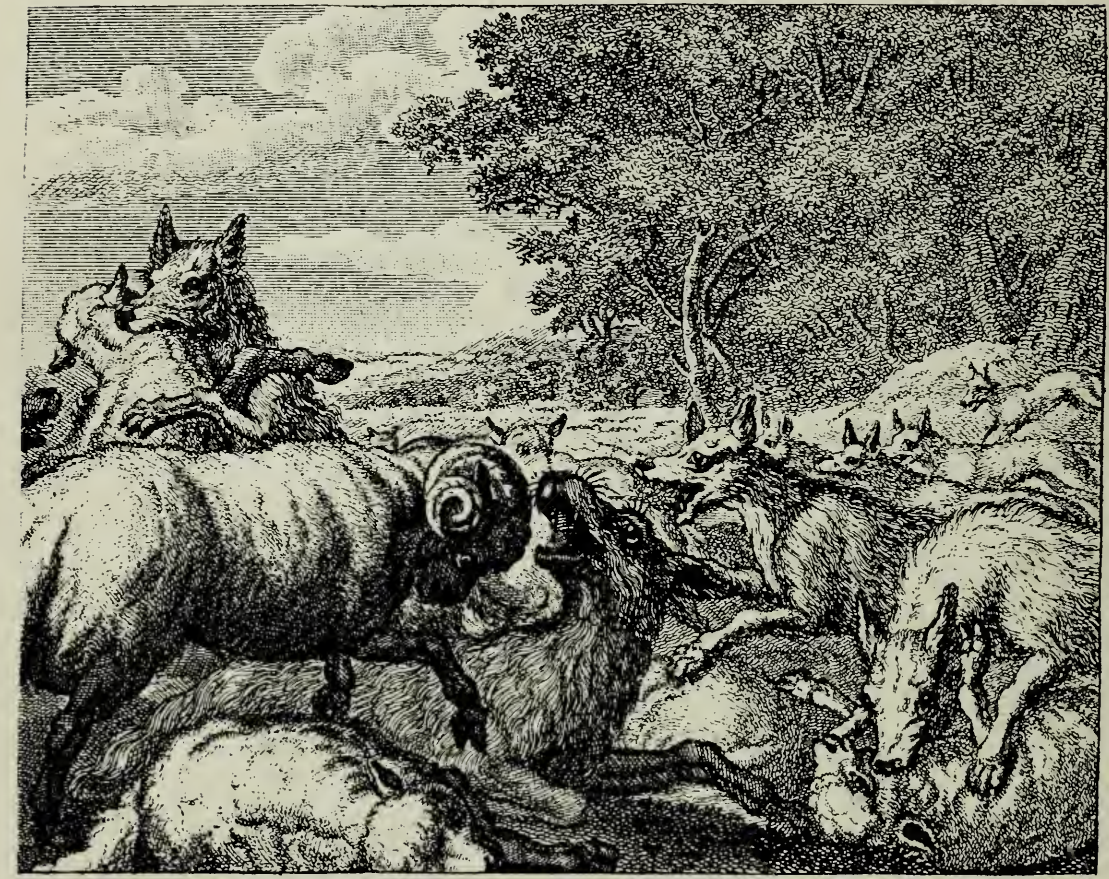
An ounce of help is worth a pound of pity.

Pity, indeed, is of itself but poor comfort at any time; and, unless it produces something more substantial, is rather impertinently troublesome, than any way agreeable. To stand bemoaning the misfortunes of our friends, without offering some expedient to alleviate them, is only echoing to their grief, and putting them in mind that they are miserable. He is truly my friend who, with a ready presence of mind, supports me; not he who condoles with me upon my ill success, and says he is sorry for my loss. In short, a favour or obligation is doubled by being well-timed; and he is the best benefactor who knows our necessities, and complies with our wishes even before we ask him.

FABLE IX.

The Wolves and the Sheep.

The Wolves and the Sheep had been a long time in a state of war together. At last a cessation of arms was proposed, in order to a treaty of peace, and hostages were to be delivered on both sides for security. The Wolves proposed that the Sheep should give up their dogs, on the one side, and that they would deliver up their young ones, on the other. This proposal was agreed to; but no sooner executed, than the young Wolves began to howl for want of their dams. The old ones took this opportunity to cry out, the treaty was



broke; and so falling upon the Sheep, who were destitute of their faithful guardians the dogs, they worried and devoured them without control.

Good watch prevents harm.

This fable is one of the many that have been used by statesmen to convey their arguments in a form convincing to the multitude.

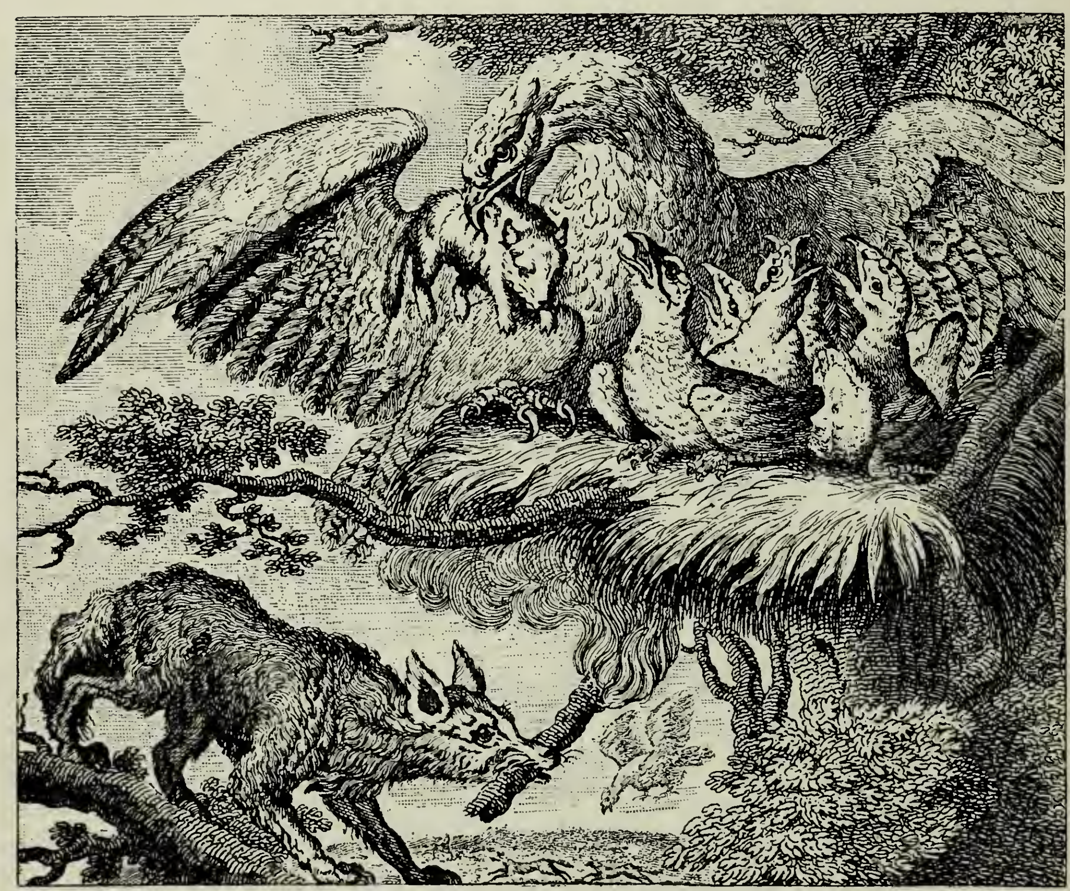
After the death of Philip of Macedon, the Thebans and Athenians thought it a favourable opportunity to shake off the Macedonian yoke, and, accordingly, they rose against his son Alexander,—Demosthenes, the great orator of Athens, taking a prominent part in the insurrection.

Alexander, however, surprised the Thebans by a rapid march, and utterly defeated them and destroyed their city. The Athenians, thereupon, took fright, and, with the most arrant meanness, sent ambassadors to Alexander to congratulate him on his success against their allies; to which Alexander replied by demanding that ten of their leading orators, with Demosthenes at their head, should be delivered up to him. Finding the cowed Athenians disposed to yield to this demand, Demosthenes related to them as a warning this fable of the Sheep who delivered up their watch-dogs to the Wolf.

FABLE X.

The Eagle and the Fox.

An Eagle that had young ones, looking out for something to feed them with, happened to spy a Fox's cub, that lay basking itself abroad in the sun. She made a stoop, and trussed it immediately; but before she had carried it quite off, the old Fox coming home, implored her, with tears in her eyes, to spare her cub, and pity the distress of a poor fond mother, who should think no affliction so great as that of losing her child. The Eagle, whose nest was up in a very high tree, thought herself secure enough from all projects of



revenge, and so bore away the cub to her young ones, without shewing any regard to the supplications of the Fox. But that subtle creature, highly incensed at this outrageous barbarity, ran to an altar, where some countrypeople had been sacrificing a kid in the open fields, and catching up a firebrand in her mouth, made towards the tree where the Eagle's nest was, with a resolution of revenge. She had scarce ascended the first branches when the Eagle, terrified with the approaching ruin of herself and family, begged of the Fox to desist, and, with much submission, returned her the cub again safe and sound.

Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure.
Like doth quit like, and measure still for measure.

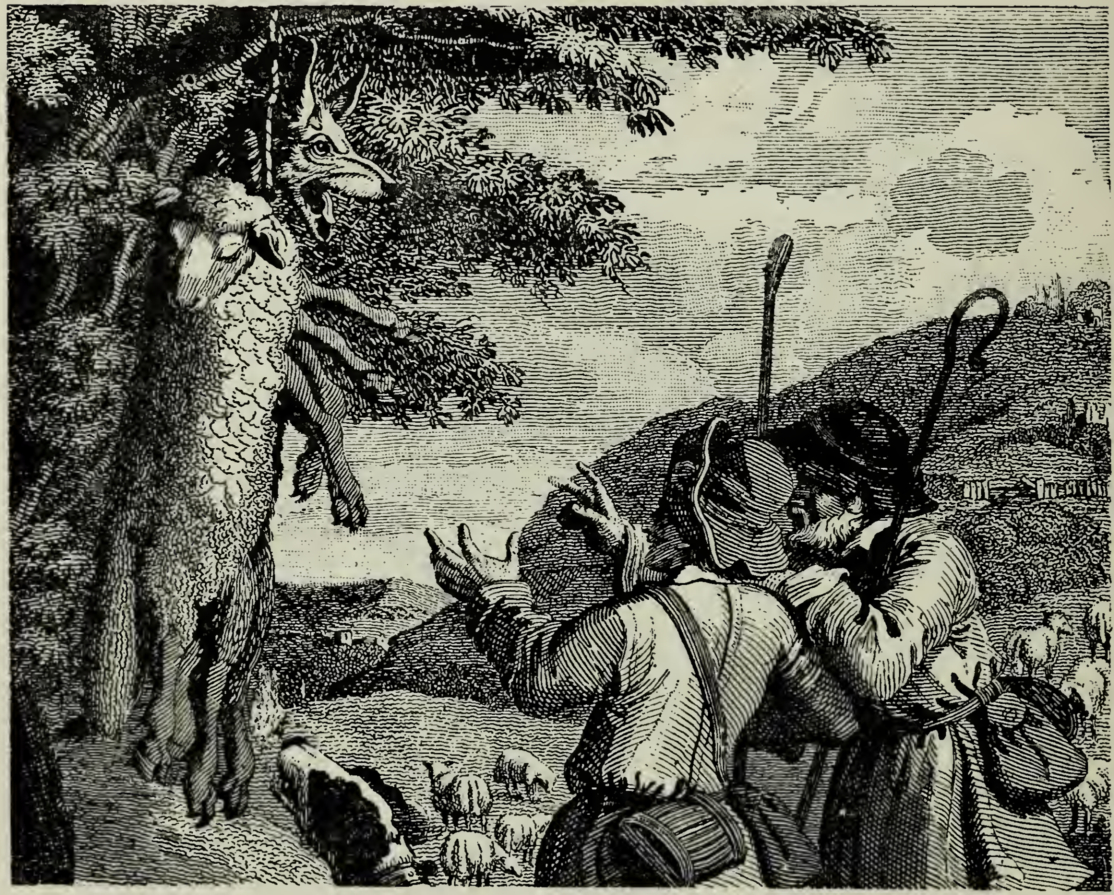
"Before the world had past her time of youth,
While polity and discipline were weak,
The precept eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,
Came forth—a light, though but as of day-break,
Strong as could then be borne. A Master meek
Proscribed the spirit fostered by that rule,
Patience *His* law, long-suffering *His* school,
And love the end, which all through peace must seek.
But lamentably do they err who strain
His mandates, given rash impulse to control
And keep vindictive thirstings from the soul,
So far that, if consistent in their scheme,
They must forbid the state to inflict a pain,
Making of social order a mere dream."

WORDSWORTH.

FABLE XI.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

A WOLF, clothing himself in the skin of a Sheep, and getting in among the flock, by this means took the opportunity to devour many of them. At last the shepherd discovered him, and cunningly fastening a rope about his neck, tied him up to a tree which stood hard by. Some other shepherds happening to pass that way, and observing what he was about, drew near, and expressed their admiration at it. "What," says one of them, "brother, do you make hanging of Sheep?"—"No," replies the other, "but I make hanging of a Wolf whenever I



catch him, though in the habit and garb of a Sheep." Then he shewed them their mistake, and they applauded the justice of the execution.

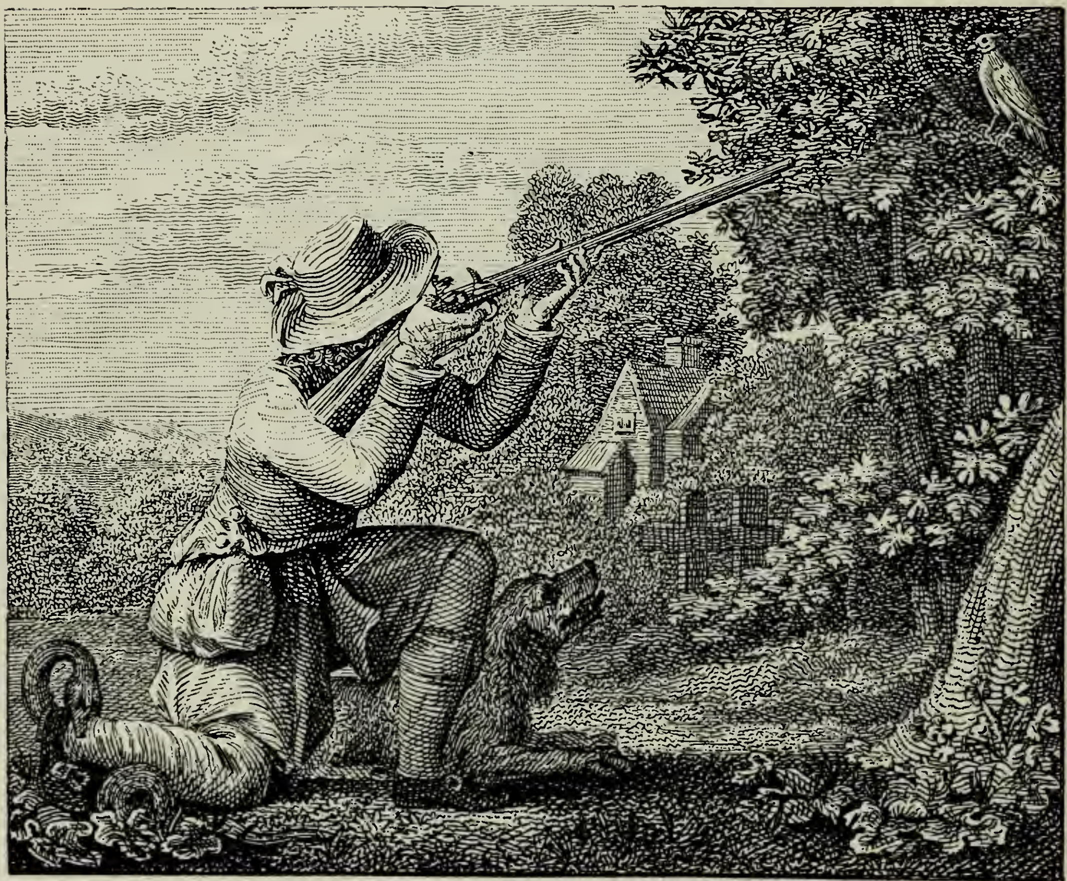
Time tries the troth in everything.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—*St Matthew* vii. 15–20.

FABLE XII.

THE FOWLER AND THE RINGDOVE.

A FOWLER took his gun, and went into the woods a-shooting. He spied a Ringdove among the branches of an oak, and intended to kill it. He clapped the piece to his shoulder, and took his aim accordingly. But, just as he was going to pull the trigger, an adder, which he had trod upon under the grass, stung him so painfully in the leg, that he was forced to quit his design, and threw his gun down in a passion. The poison immediately infected his blood, and his whole body began to mortify; which, when he perceived, he could not help owning



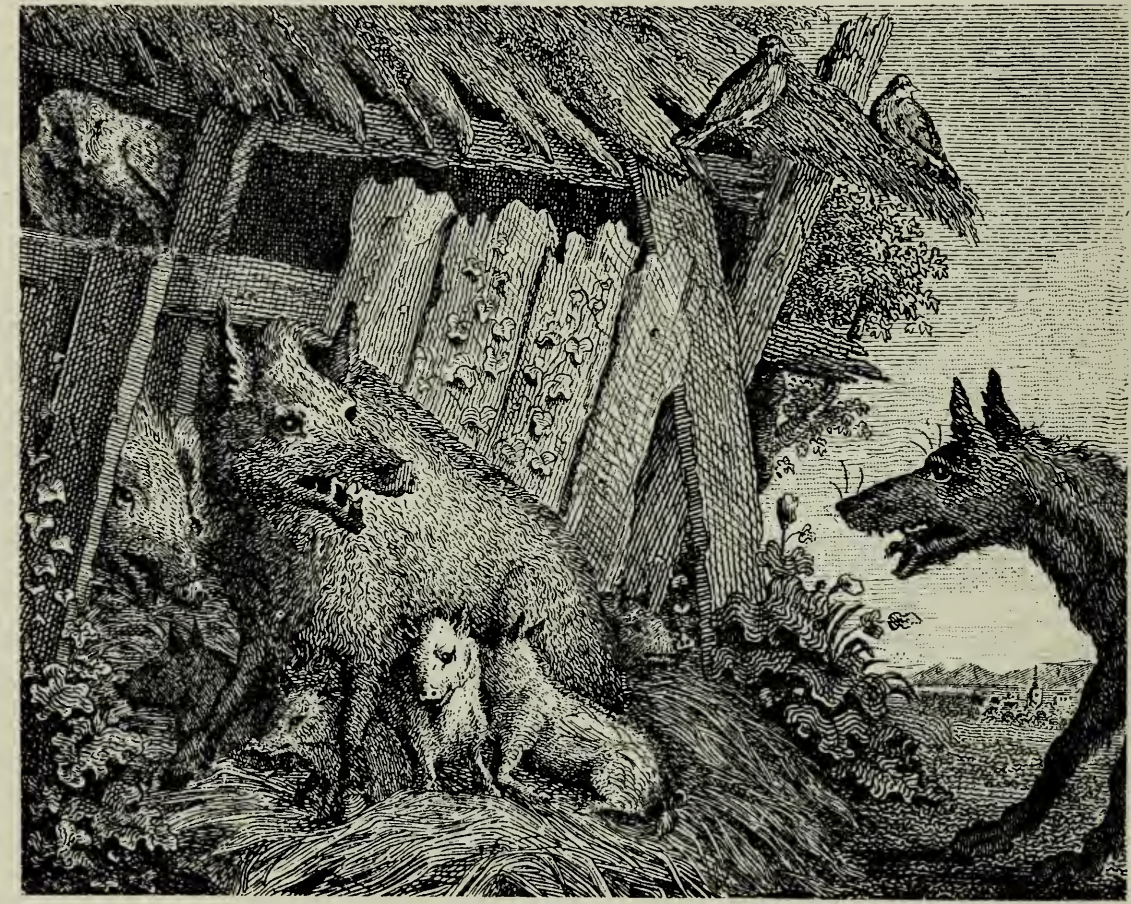
it to be just. "Fate," says he, "has brought destruction upon me while I was contriving the death of another."

Every one is the son of his own works.

"The mischief that we meditate to others, falls commonly upon our own heads, and ends in a judgment, as well as a disappointment. Take it another way and it may serve to mind us how happily people are diverted many times from the execution of a malicious design by the grace and goodness of a preventing Providence. A pistol's not taking fire may save the life of a good man; and the innocent Pigeon had died if the spiteful snake had not broken the Fowler's aim: that is to say, good may be drawn out of evil, and a body's life may be saved without having any obligation to his preserver."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE XIII.

THE SOW AND THE WOLF.



A SOW had just farrowed, and lay in the sty, with her whole litter of pigs about her. A Wolf, who longed for one of them, but knew not how to come at it, endeavoured to insinuate himself into the Sow's good opinion; and, accordingly, coming up to her—"How does the good woman in the straw do?" says he. "Can I be of any service to you, Mrs Sow, in relation to your little family here? If you have a mind to go abroad, and air yourself a little, or so, you may depend upon it, I will take as much care of your pigs as you could do yourself."—"Your humble servant," says the Sow; "I thoroughly understand your meaning; and, to let you know I do, I must be so free as to tell you, I had rather have your room than your company; and, therefore, if you would act like a Wolf of honour, and oblige me, I beg I may never see your face again."

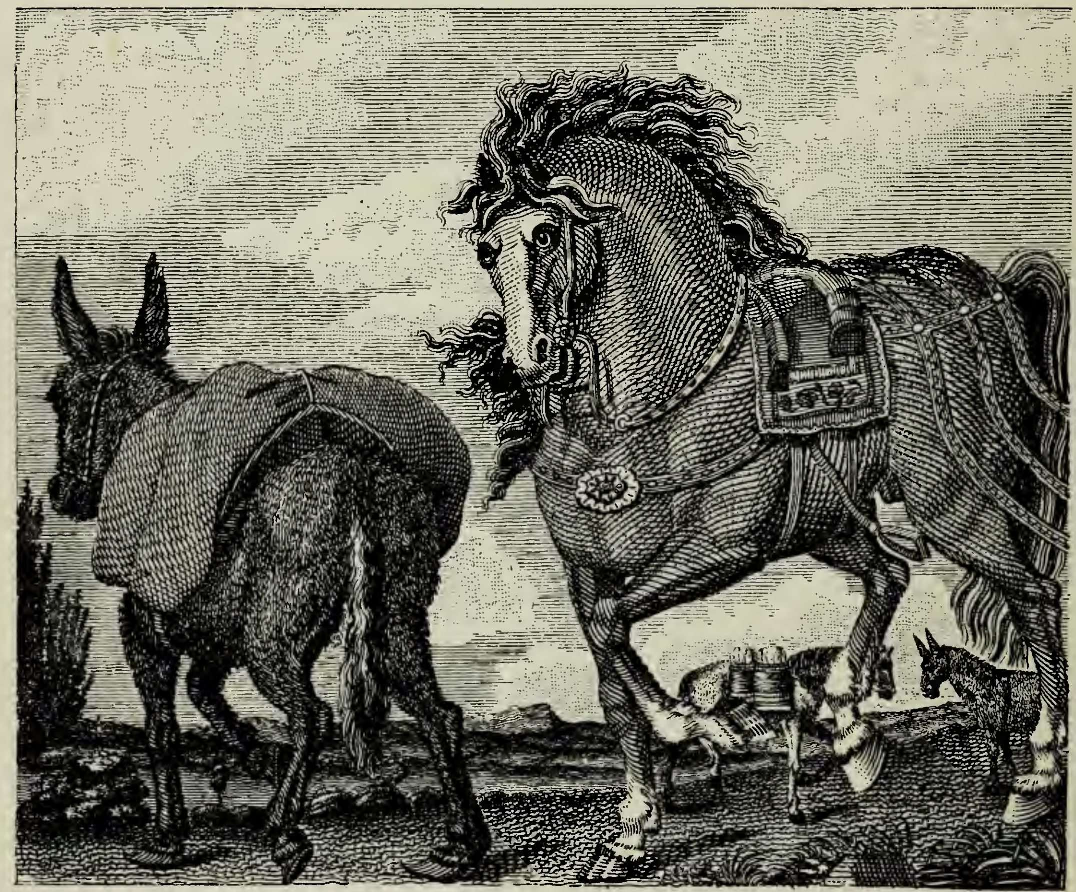
Let me have men about me that are fat;
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights;
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.
Julius Cæsar, Act I. Sc. ii.

The being officiously good-natured and civil is something so uncommon in the world, that one cannot hear a man make profession of it without being surprised, or, at least, suspecting the disinterestedness of his intentions. Especially, when one who is a stranger to us, or, though known, is ill-esteemed by us, will be making offers of services, we have great reason to look to ourselves, and exert a shyness and coldness towards him. We should resolve not to receive even favours from bad kind of people; for should it happen that some immediate mischief was not couched in them, yet it is dangerous to have obligations to such, or to give them an opportunity of making a communication with us.

FABLE XIV.

THE HORSE AND THE ASS.

THE Horse, adorned with his great war-saddle, and champing his foaming bridle, came thundering along the way, and made the mountains echo with his loud, shrill neighing. He had not gone far before he overtook an Ass, who was labouring under a heavy burden, and moving slowly on in the same track with himself. Immediately he called out to him, in a haughty, imperious tone, and threatened to trample him in the dirt if he did not break the way for him. The poor, patient Ass, not daring to dispute the matter, quietly got out of his



way as fast as he could, and let him go by. Not long after this, the same Horse, in an engagement with the enemy, happened to be shot in the eye, which made him unfit for show, or any military business; so he was stript of his fine ornaments, and sold to a carrier. The Ass, meeting him in this forlorn condition, thought that now it was his time to insult; and so, says he, "Hey-day, friend, is it you? Well, I always believed that pride of yours would one day have a fall."

Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

"Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh, his wife.

"And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

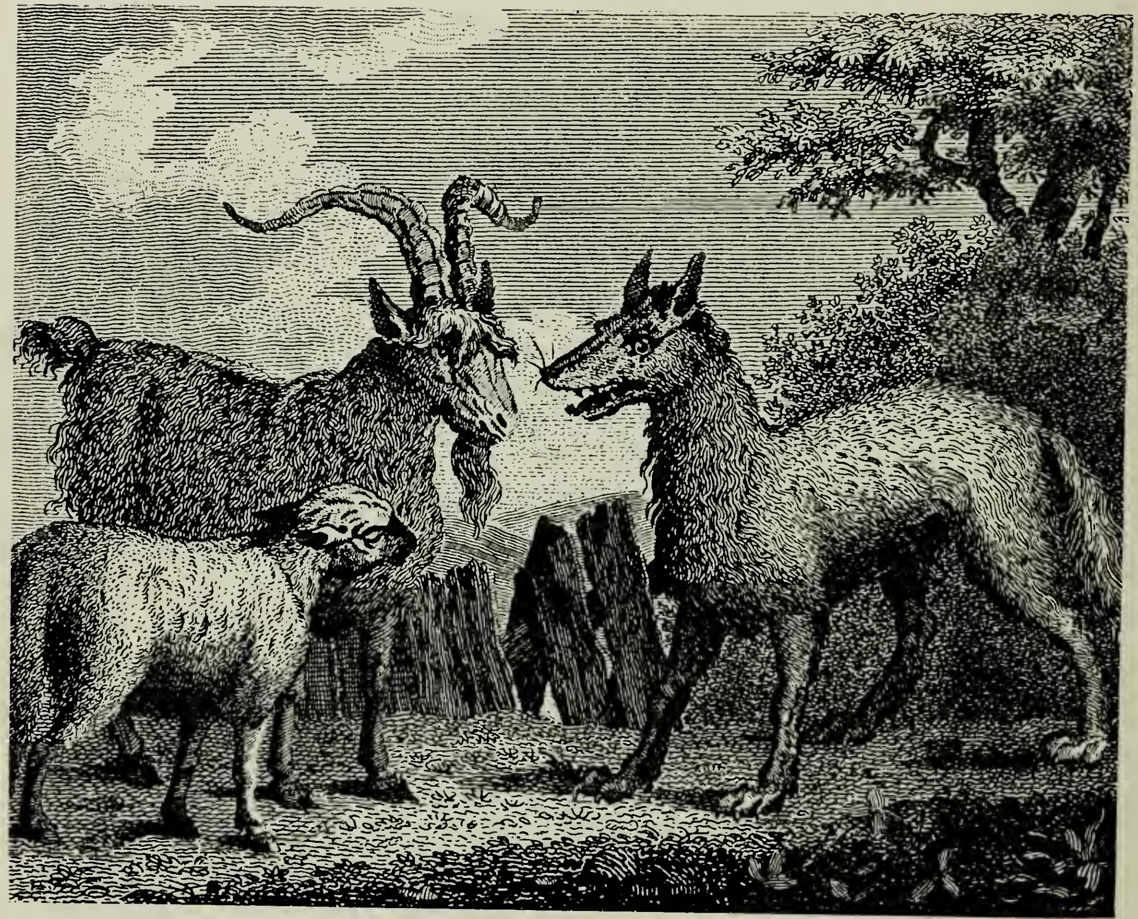
"Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made."—*Esther* v. 9–14.

"And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai."—*Esther* vii. 9, 10.

FABLE XV.

THE WOLF, THE LAMB, AND THE GOAT.

As a Lamb was following a Goat, up comes a Wolf wheedling to get him aside to make a breakfast of him: "You're mistaken," says the Wolf, "this is none of your mother; she is yonder," pointing to a flock of sheep at a distance. "Well," says the Lamb, "but my mother has placed me here for my security; and you would fain get me into a corner to worry me. Prithee which of the two am I to trust now."



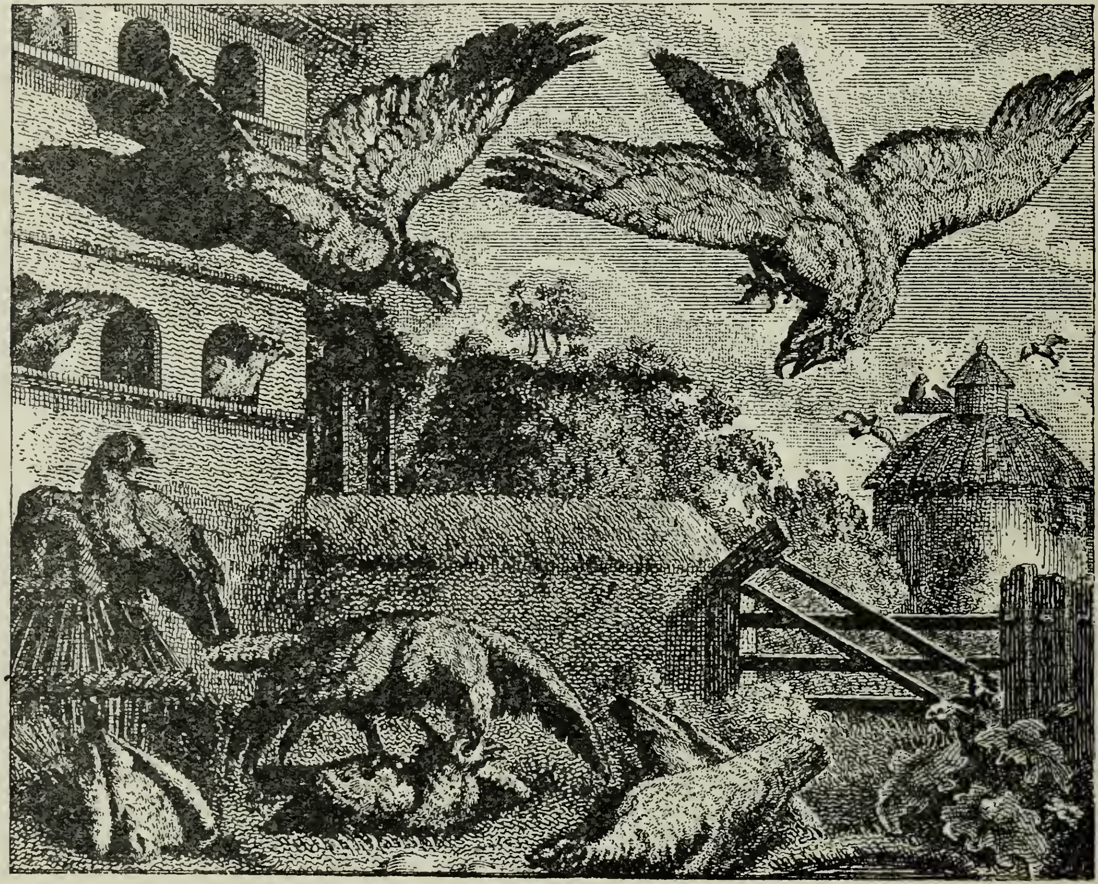
Train up a child in the way he should go.

"There is ordinarily such a pride and headiness in youth that they cannot abide to submit to the counsels and directions of their elders, and therefore, to shake them off, are willing to have them pass for the effects of dotage, when they are indeed the fruits of sobriety and experience. To such the exhortation of Solomon is very necessary, 'Hearken to thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.' A multitude of Texts more there are in that Book to this purpose, which shews that the wisest men thought it necessary for children to attend to the counsel of their parents. But the youth of our age set up for wisdom the quite contrary way, and think they then become wits, when they are advanced to the despising the counsel, yea, mocking the persons of their parents. Let such, if they will not practise the exhortations, yet remember the threatenings of the wise man, 'The eye that mocketh his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the raven of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.'"—*The Whole Duty of Man.*

FABLE XVI.

The Kite and the Pigeons.

A Kite, who had kept sailing in the air for many days near a dove-house, and made a stoop at several Pigeons, but all to no purpose (for they were too nimble for him), at last had recourse to stratagem, and took his opportunity one day to make a declaration to them, in which he set forth his own just and good intentions, who had nothing more at heart than the defence and protection of the Pigeons in their ancient rights and liberties, and how concerned he was at their fears and jealousies of a foreign invasion, especially their unjust and



unreasonable suspicions of himself, as if he intended, by force of arms, to break in upon their constitution, and erect a tyrannical government over them. To prevent all which, and thoroughly to quiet their minds, he thought proper to propose to them such terms of alliance and articles of peace as might for ever cement a good understanding betwixt them: the principal of which was, that they should accept of him for their king, and invest him with all kingly privilege and prerogative over them. The poor simple Pigeons consented: the Kite took the coronation oath after a very solemn manner, on his part, and the Doves, the oaths of allegiance and fidelity, on theirs. But much time had not passed over their heads before the good Kite pretended that it was part of his prerogative to devour a Pigeon whenever he pleased. And this he was not contented to do himself only, but instructed the rest of the royal family in the same kingly arts of government. The Pigeons, reduced to this miserable condition, said one to the other, "Ah! we deserve no better! Why did we let him come in?"

Give a rogue an inch and he'll take an ell.

It was the fear that Cæsar, when once the imperial crown was upon his head, and the sceptre in his hand, would wield his power over the State in the tyrannical form in which the crafty Kite governed the poor foolish Pigeons who had placed themselves in his power, that led Brutus to form the desperate resolution of striking a blow that was to free Rome from servitude. So strong was his conviction of the danger to the State of placing unchecked power in the hands of one ambitious man that he persuades himself that he is justified in the incurring the stain of assassination which was to cling to his name for ever after. That it was not without a deep sense of the evils against which he was contending may be seen in the soliloquy which Shakespeare has put into his mouth:—

"He would be crowned:
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him?—that:—

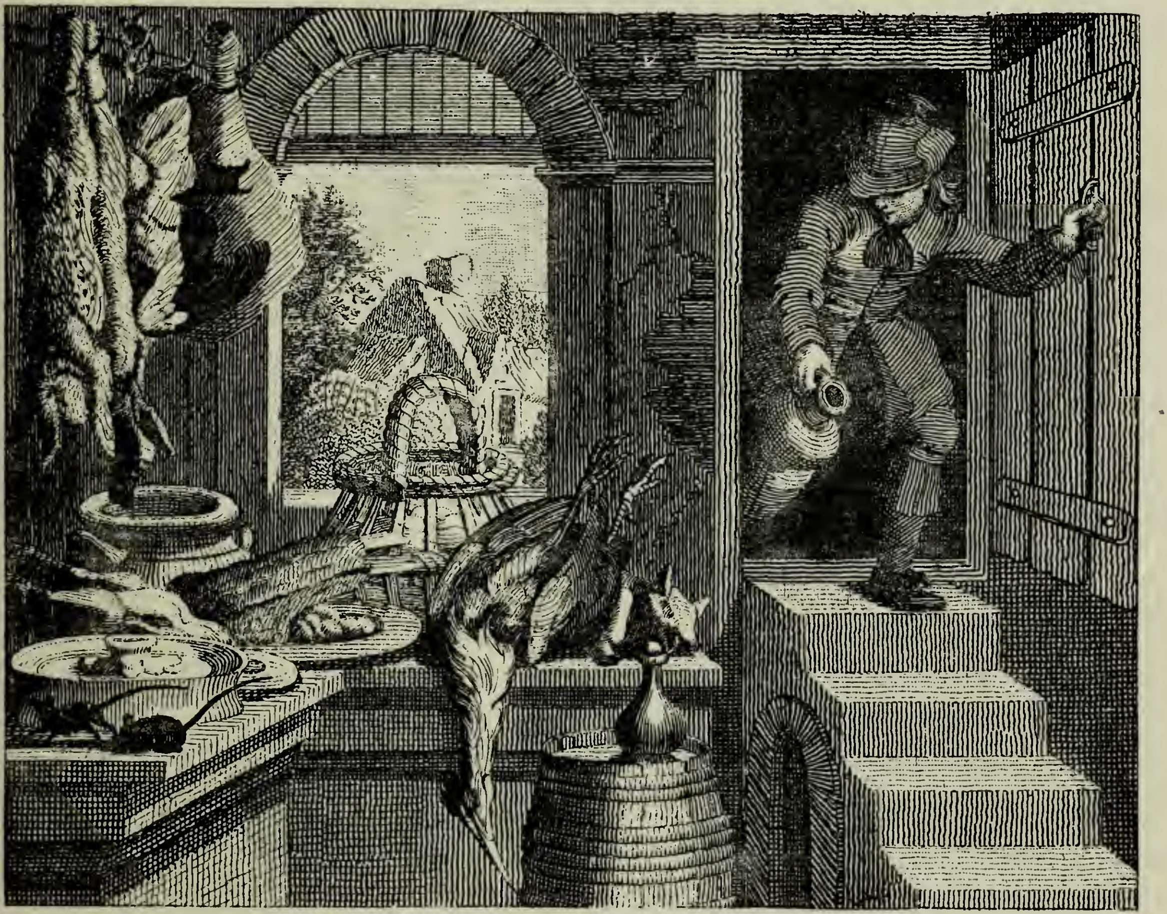
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections swayed
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. So Cæsar may.
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities:
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatched, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell."

Julius Cæsar.

FABLE XVII.

THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE CITY MOUSE.

AN honest, plain, sensible Country Mouse is said to have entertained at his hole one day a fine Mouse of the Town. Having formerly been playfellows together, they were old acquaintance, which served as an apology for the visit. However, as master of the house, he thought himself obliged to do the honours of it, in all respects, and to make as great a stranger of his guest as he possibly could. In order to this, he set before him a reserve of delicate grey peas and bacon, a dish of fine oatmeal, some parings of new cheese, and, to



crown all with a dessert, a remnant of a charming mellow apple. In good manners, he forbore to eat any himself, lest the stranger should not have enough ; but, that he might seem to bear the other company, sat and nibbled a piece of a wheaten straw very busily. At last says the spark of the town, "Old crony, give me leave to be a little free with you ; how can you bear to live in this nasty, dirty, melancholy hole here, with nothing but woods, and meadows, and mountains, and rivulets about you ? Do not you prefer the conversation of the world to the chirping of birds, and the splendour of a court to the rude aspect of an uncultivated desert ? Come, take my word for it, you will find it a change for the better. Never stand considering, but away this moment. Remember, we are not immortal, and therefore have no time to lose. Make sure of to-day, and spend it as agreeably as you can ; you know not what may happen to-morrow." In short, these and such-like arguments prevailed, and his Country Acquaintance was resolved to go to town that night. So they both set out upon their journey together, proposing to sneak in after the close of the evening. They did so ; and, about midnight, made their entry into a certain great house, where there had been an extraordinary entertainment the day before, and several tit-bits, which some of the servants had purloined, were hid under the seat of a window. The Country Guest was immediately placed in the midst of a rich Persian carpet : and now it was the Courtier's turn to entertain ; who, indeed, acquitted himself in that capacity with the utmost readiness and address, changing the courses as elegantly, and tasting everything first as judiciously, as any clerk of a kitchen. The other sat and enjoyed himself like a delighted epicure, tickled to the last degree with this new turn of his affairs ; when, on a sudden, a noise of somebody opening the door made them start from their seats, and scuttle in confusion about the dining-room. Our Country Friend, in particular, was ready to die with fear at the barking of a huge mastiff or two, which opened their throats just about the same time, and made the whole house echo. At last, recovering himself,—"Well," says he, "if this be your town life, much good may you do with it: give me my poor quiet hole again, with my homely, but comfortable, grey peas."

Enough is as good as a feast.

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,—
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

. . . .

If to the city sped—what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know,
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here richly deck'd admits the gorgeous train:
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!

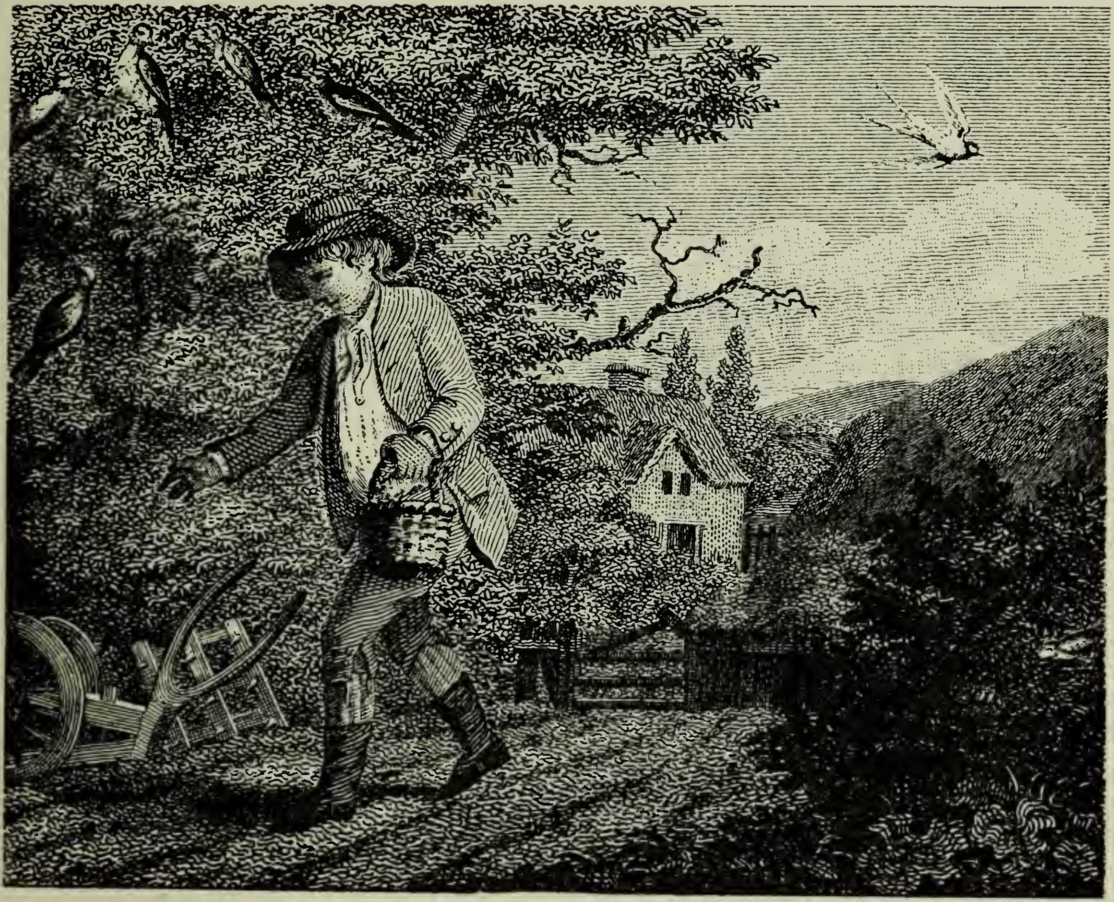
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes,
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *The Deserted Village.*

FABLE XVIII.

THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS.

A FARMER was sowing his field with flax. The Swallow observed it, and desired the other Birds to assist her in picking the seed up, and destroying it; telling them, that flax was that pernicious material of which the thread was composed which made the fowler's nets, and by that means contributed to the ruin of so many innocent Birds. But the poor Swallow not having the good fortune to be regarded, the flax sprung up, and appeared above the ground. She then put them in mind once more of their impending danger, and wished them to



pluck it up in the bud, before it went any farther. They still neglected her warnings; and the flax grew up into the high stalk. She yet again desired them to attack it, for that it was not yet too late. But all that she could get was to be ridiculed and despised for a silly pretending prophet. The Swallow, finding all her remonstrances availed nothing, was resolved to leave the society of such unthinking, careless creatures, before it was too late. So quitting the woods, she repaired to the houses, and forsaking the conversation of the Birds, has ever since made her abode among the dwellings of men.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished.

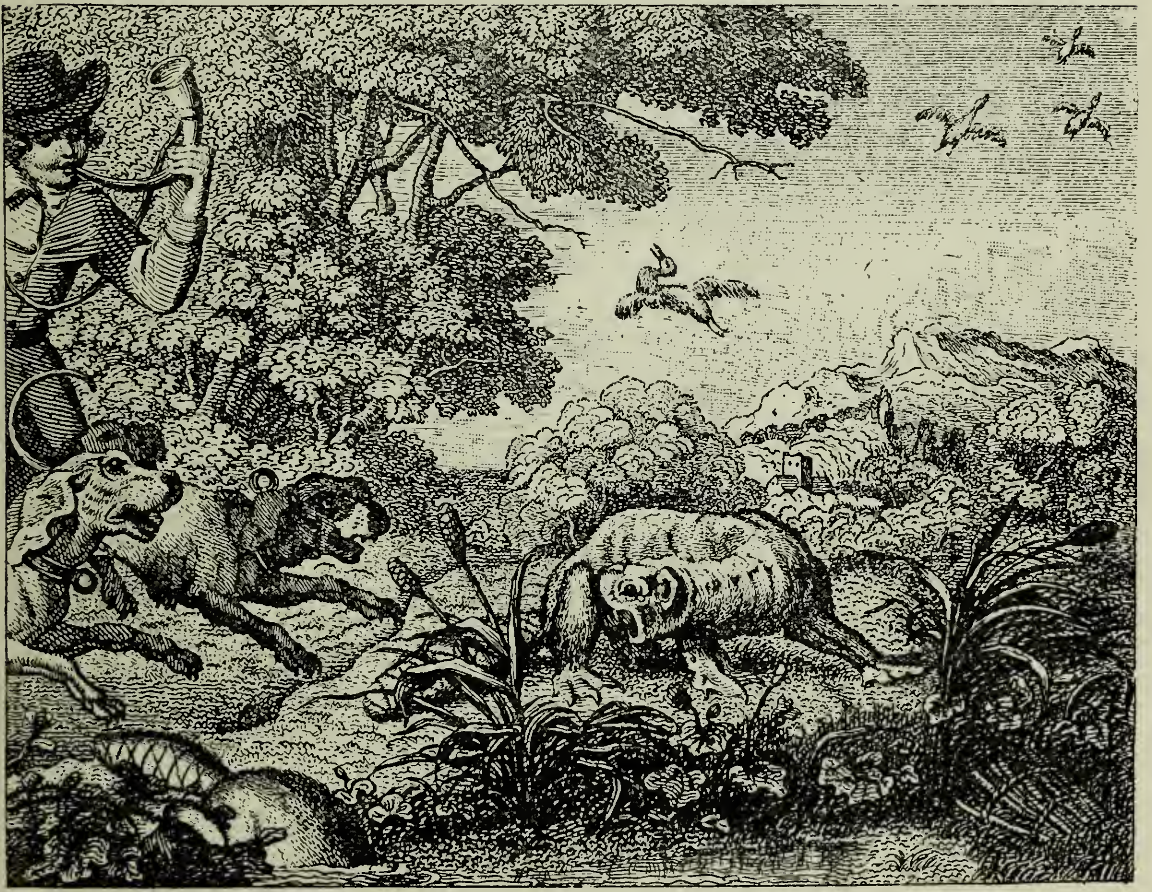
"Perhaps few narratives in History or Mythology are more significant than that Moslem one, of Moses and the dwellers by the Dead Sea. A tribe of men dwelt on the shores of that same Asphaltic Lake; and having forgotten, as we are all too prone to do, the inner facts of Nature, and taken up with the falsities and outer semblances of it, were fallen into sad conditions,—verging indeed towards a certain far deeper lake. Whereupon it pleased kind Heaven to send them the Prophet Moses, with an instructive word of warning, out of which might have sprung 'remedial measures' not a few. But no; the men of the Dead Sea discovered, as the Valet species always does in heroes or prophets, no comeliness in Moses; listened with real tedium to Moses, with light grinning, or with splenetic sniffs and sneers, affecting even to yawn; and signified, in short, that they found him a humbug, and even a bore. Such was the candid theory these men of the Asphalt Lake formed to themselves of Moses, That probably he was a humbug, that certainly he was a bore.

"Moses withdrew; but Nature and his vigorous veracities did not withdraw. The men of the Dead Sea, when we next went to visit them, were all 'changed into apes'; sitting on the trees there grinning now in the most *un*affected manner; gibbering and chattering very genuine nonsense; finding the whole universe now a most indisputable humbug! The universe has *become* a humbug to these apes who thought it one."—THOMAS CARLYLE: *Past and Present.*

FABLE XIX.

THE HUNTED BEAVER.

IT is said that a Beaver (a creature which lives chiefly in the water) has a certain part about him which is good in physic, and that, upon this account, he is often hunted down and killed. Once upon a time, as one of these creatures was hard pursued by the dogs, and knew not how to escape, recollecting with himself the reason of his being thus persecuted, with a great resolution and presence of mind he bit off the part which his hunters wanted, and throwing it towards them, by these means escaped with his life.



Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

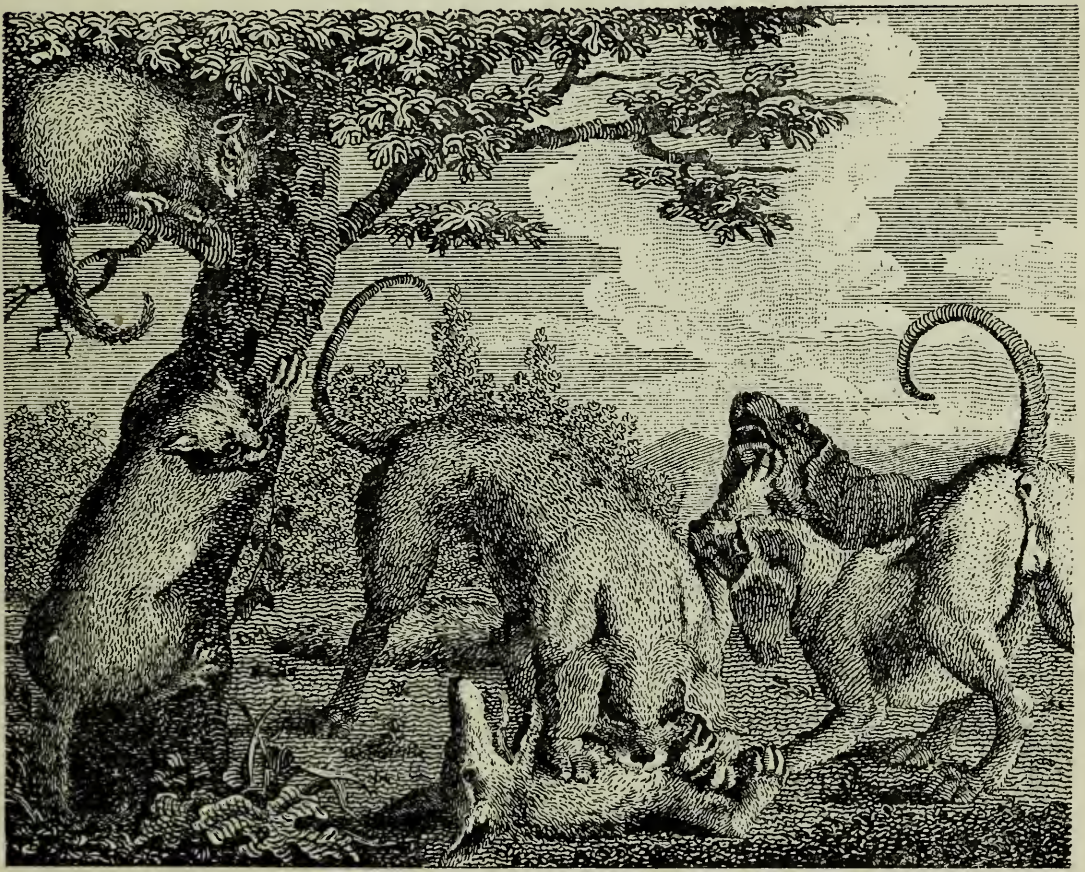
"We find the doctrine and practice of this fable to be verified in State chases as well as in those of the woods," says L'Estrange, and we may take the following instance from the history of James the Second's reign to exemplify the fact.

"In spite of mortifications and humiliations, both Rochester and Sunderland clung to office with the gripe of drowning men. Both attempted to propitiate the King by affecting a willingness to be reconciled to his Church. But there was a point at which Rochester was determined to stop. He went to the verge of apostasy: but there he recoiled: and the world, in consideration of the firmness with which he refused to take the final step, granted him a liberal amnesty for all former compliances. Sunderland, less scrupulous and less sensible of shame, resolved to atone for his late moderation, and to recover the royal confidence, by an act which, to a mind impressed with the importance of religious truth, must have appeared to be one of the most flagitious of crimes, and which even men of the world regard as the last excess of baseness. About a week before the day fixed for the great trial, it was publicly announced that he was a Papist. The King talked with delight of this triumph of divine grace. Courtiers and envoys kept their countenances as well as they could, while the renegade protested that he had long been convinced of the impossibility of finding salvation out of the communion of Rome, and that his conscience would not let him rest till he had renounced the heresies in which he had been brought up."—MACAULAY.

FABLE XX.

THE CAT AND THE FOX.

As the Cat and the Fox were talking politics together, on a time, in the middle of a forest, Reynard said, "Let things turn out ever so bad, he did not care, for he had a thousand tricks for them yet, before they should hurt him."—"But pray," says he, "Mrs Puss, suppose there should be an invasion, what course do you design to take?"—"Nay," says the Cat, "I have but one shift for it, and if that won't do, I am undone."—"I am sorry for you," replies Reynard, "with all my heart, and would gladly furnish you with one or two of mine, but indeed,



neighbour, as times go, it is not good to trust; we must even be every one for himself, as the saying is, and so your humble servant." These words were scarce out of his mouth, when they were alarmed with a pack of hounds, that came upon them full cry. The Cat, by the help of her single shift, ran up a tree, and sat securely among the top branches; from whence she beheld Reynard, who had not been able to get out of sight, overtaken, with his thousand tricks, and torn in as many pieces by the dogs which had surrounded him.

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

"'I suppose,' cried my son, 'that the narrative of such a life as yours must be extremely instructive and amusing.'

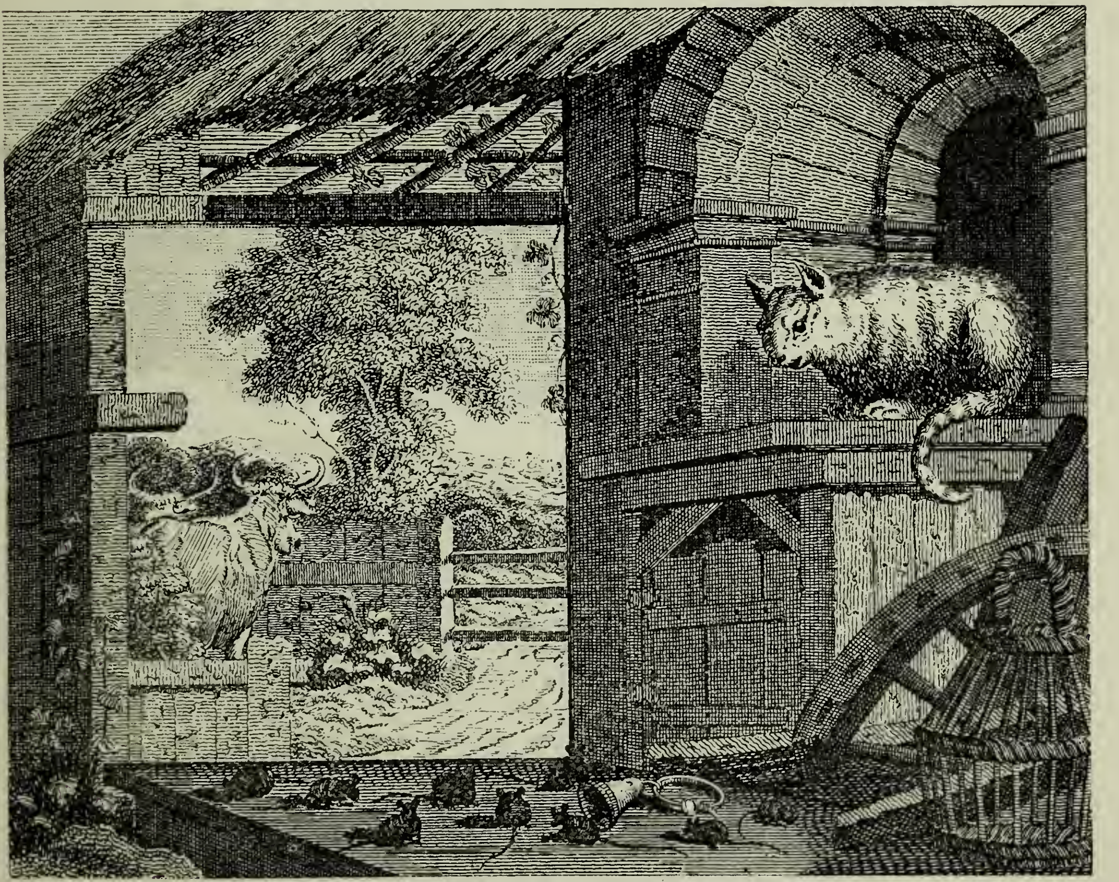
"'Not much of either,' returned Mr Jenkinson. 'Those relations which describe the tricks and vices of mankind, by increasing our suspicion in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey's end.

"'Indeed, I think, from my own experience, that the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was thought cunning from my very childhood: when but seven years old, the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning, that not one would trust me. Thus I was at last obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of detection. I used often to laugh at your honest, simple neighbour, Flamborough, and, one way or another, generally cheated him once a year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion and grew rich; while I still continued tricksy and cunning, and was poor without the consolation of being honest.'"—OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

FABLE XXI.

THE CAT AND THE MICE.

A CERTAIN house was much infested with Mice; but at last they got a Cat, who catched and eat every day some of them. The Mice, finding their numbers grow thin, consulted what was best to be done for the preservation of the public from the jaws of the devouring Cat. They debated and came to this resolution, That no one should go down below the upper shelf. The Cat, observing the Mice no longer came down as usual, hungry and disappointed of her prey, had recourse to this stratagem: she hung by her hinder legs on a peg which



stuck in the wall, and made as if she had been dead, hoping by this lure to entice the Mice to come down. She had not been in this posture long, before a cunning old Mouse peeped over the edge of the shelf, and spoke thus:—"Aha, my good friend, are you there! there may you be! I would not trust myself with you, though your skin were stuffed with straw."

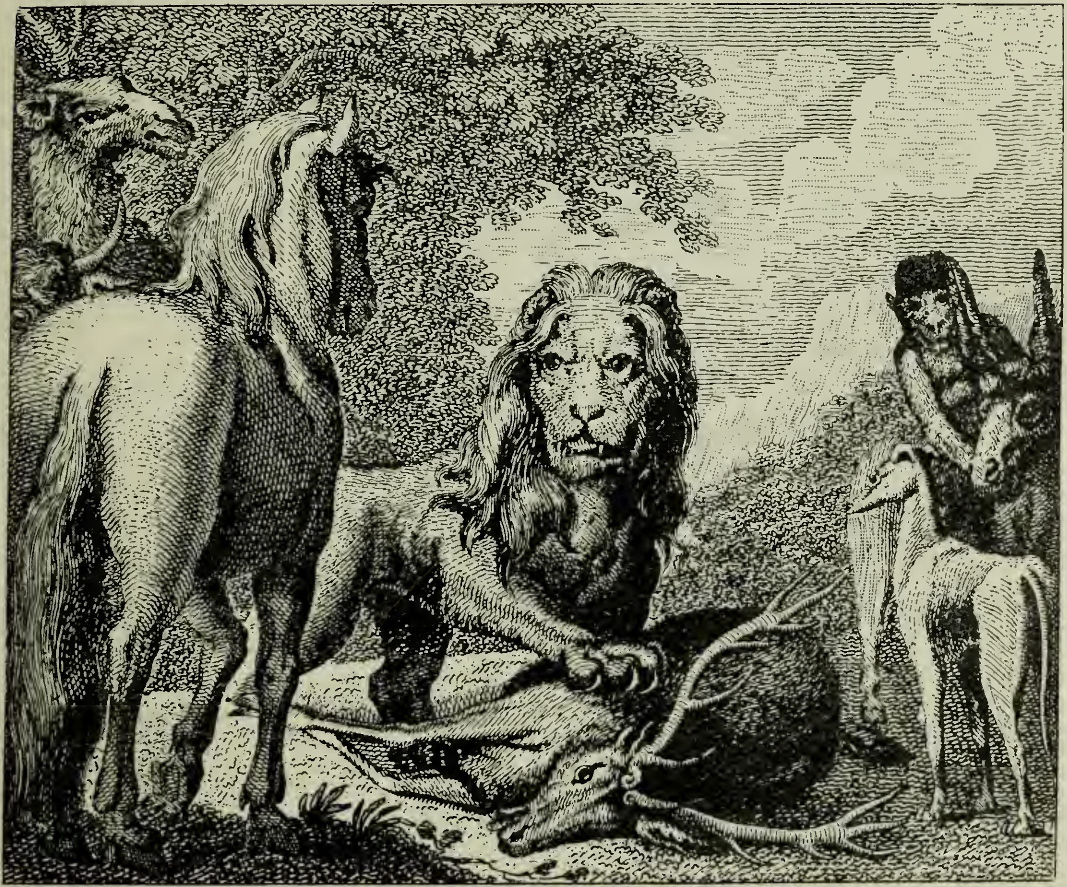
The burnt child dreads the fire.

Prudent folks never trust those a second time who have deceived them once. And, indeed, we cannot well be too cautious in following this rule; for, upon examination, we shall find, that most of the misfortunes which befall us proceed from our too great credulity. They that know how to suspect, without exposing or hurting themselves, till honesty comes to be more in fashion, can never suspect too much.

FABLE XXII.

THE LION AND OTHER BEASTS.

THE Lion and several other Beasts entered into an alliance offensive and defensive, and were to live very sociably together in the forest. One day, having made a sort of an excursion by way of hunting, they took a very fine, large, fat deer, which was divided into four parts; there happening to be then present his majesty the Lion, and only three others. After the division was made, and the parts were set out, his majesty advancing forward some steps, and pointing to one of the shares, was pleased to declare himself after the following



manner: "This I seize and take possession of as my right, which devolves to me, as I am descended by a true, lineal, hereditary succession from the royal family of Lion: that (pointing to the second) I claim by, I think, no unreasonable demand; considering that all the engagements you have with the enemy turn chiefly upon my courage and conduct; and you very well know, that wars are too expensive to be carried on without proper supplies. Then (nodding his head towards the third) that I shall take by virtue of my prerogative; to which, I make no question, but so dutiful and loyal a people will pay all the deference and regard that I can desire. Now, as for the remaining part, the necessity of our present affairs is so very urgent, our stock so low, and our credit so impaired and weakened, that I must insist upon your granting that, without any hesitation or demur; and hereof fail not at your peril."

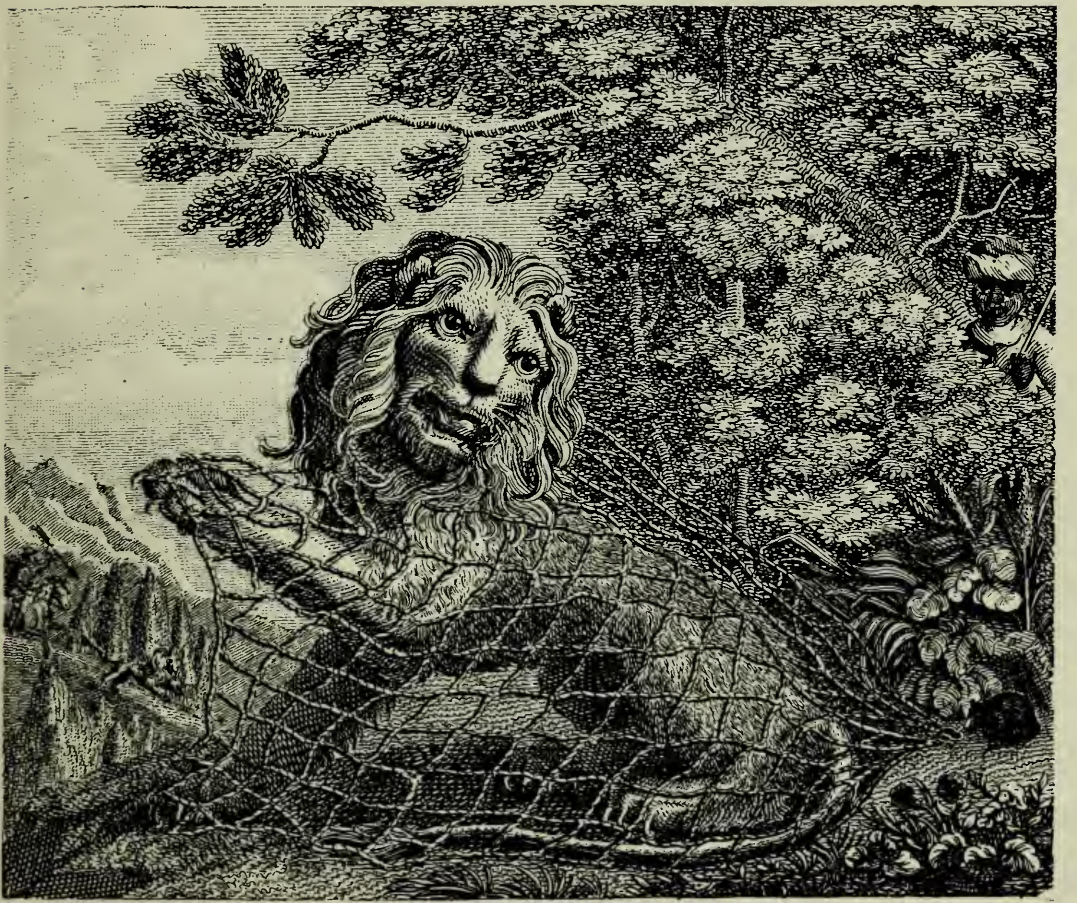
Might overcomes Right.

"By oppression, I mean that open and barefaced robbery of seizing upon the possessions of others, and owning and avowing the doing so. For the doing of this there are several instruments; as first, That of power, by which many nations and princes have been turned out of their rights, and many private men out of their estates; sometimes again, Law is made the instrument of it; he that covets his neighbour's lands or goods, pretends a claim to them, and then by corrupting of Justice, by bribes and gifts, or else overruling it by greatness and authority, gets judgment on his side; this is a high oppression, and of the worst sort, thus to make the law, which was intended for the protection and defence of men's rights, to be the means of overthrowing them; and it is a very heavy guilt, that lies both on him that procures and on him that pronounces such a sentence; yea, and on the lawyer too that pleads such a cause, for by so doing he assists in the oppression."—*The Whole Duty of Man.*

FABLE XXIII.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

A LION, faint with heat, and weary with hunting, was laid down to take his repose under the spreading boughs of a thick, shady oak. It happened that, while he slept, a company of scrambling mice ran over his back, and waked him; upon which, starting up, he clapped his paw upon one of them, and was just going to put it to death, when the little suppliant implored his mercy in a very moving manner, begging him not to stain his noble character with the blood of so despicable and small a beast. The Lion, considering the matter, thought



proper to do as he was desired, and immediately released his little trembling prisoner. Not long after, traversing the forest in pursuit of his prey, he chanced to run into the toils of the hunters; from whence, not able to disengage himself, he set up a most hideous and loud roar. The Mouse, hearing the voice, and knowing it to be the Lion's, immediately repaired to the place, and bid him fear nothing, for that he was his friend. Then straight he fell to work, and, with his little sharp teeth, gnawing asunder the knots and fastenings of the toils, set the royal brute at liberty.

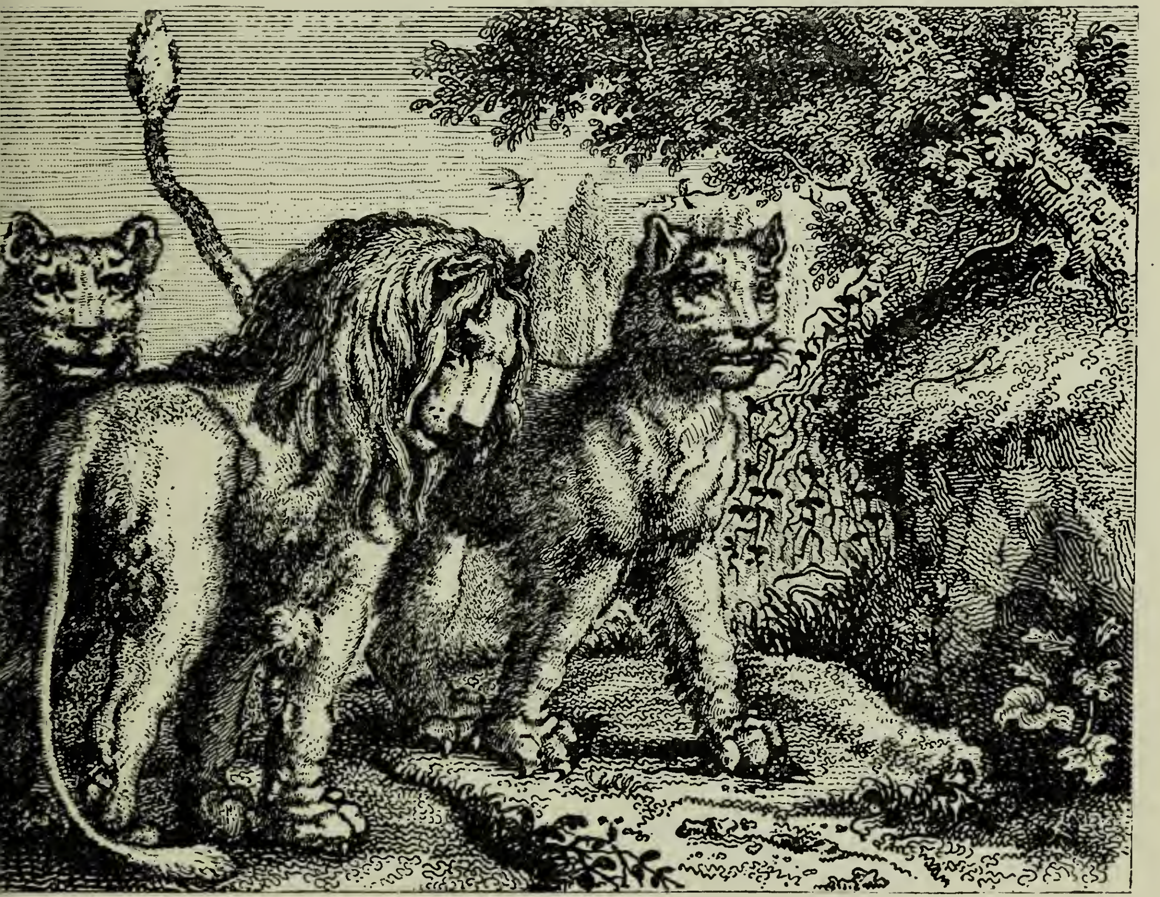
Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many aays.

This fable gives us to understand, that there is no person in the world so little, but even the greatest may, at some time or other, stand in need of his assistance; and consequently that it is good to use clemency, where there is any room for it, towards those who fall within our power. A generosity of this kind is a handsome virtue, and looks very graceful whenever it is exerted, if there were nothing else in it: but as the lowest people in life may, upon occasion, have it in their power either to serve or hurt us, that makes it our duty, in point of common interest, to behave ourselves with good nature and lenity towards all with whom we have to do. Then the gratitude of the Mouse, and his readiness, not only to repay, but even to exceed, the obligation due to his benefactor, notwithstanding his little body, gives us the specimen of a great soul, which is never so much delighted as with an opportunity of shewing how sensible it is of favours received.

FABLE XXIV.

The Fatal Marriage.

THE Lion aforesaid, touched with the grateful procedure of the Mouse, and resolving not to be outdone in generosity by any wild beast whatsoever, desired his little deliverer to name his own terms, for that he might depend upon his complying with any proposal he should make. The Mouse, fired with ambition at this gracious offer, did not so much consider what was proper for him to ask, as what was in the power of his prince to grant; and so presumptuously demanded his princely daughter, the young Lioness, in marriage. The Lion



consented; but when he would have given the royal virgin into his possession, she, like a giddy thing as she was, not minding how she walked, by chance set her paw upon her spouse, who was coming to meet her, and crushed her little dear to pieces.

The hind that would be mated by the lion must die for love.

"Ere with cold beads of midnight dew
Had mingled tears of thine
I grieved, fond youth! that thou should'st sue
To haughty Geraldine.

"Immovable by generous sighs,
She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
An oriental chain.

"Pine not like them with arms across,
Forgetting in thy care,
How the fast-rooted trees can toss
Their branches in mid air.

"The humblest rivulet will take
Its own wild liberties;
And, every day, the imprisoned lake
Is flowing in the breeze.

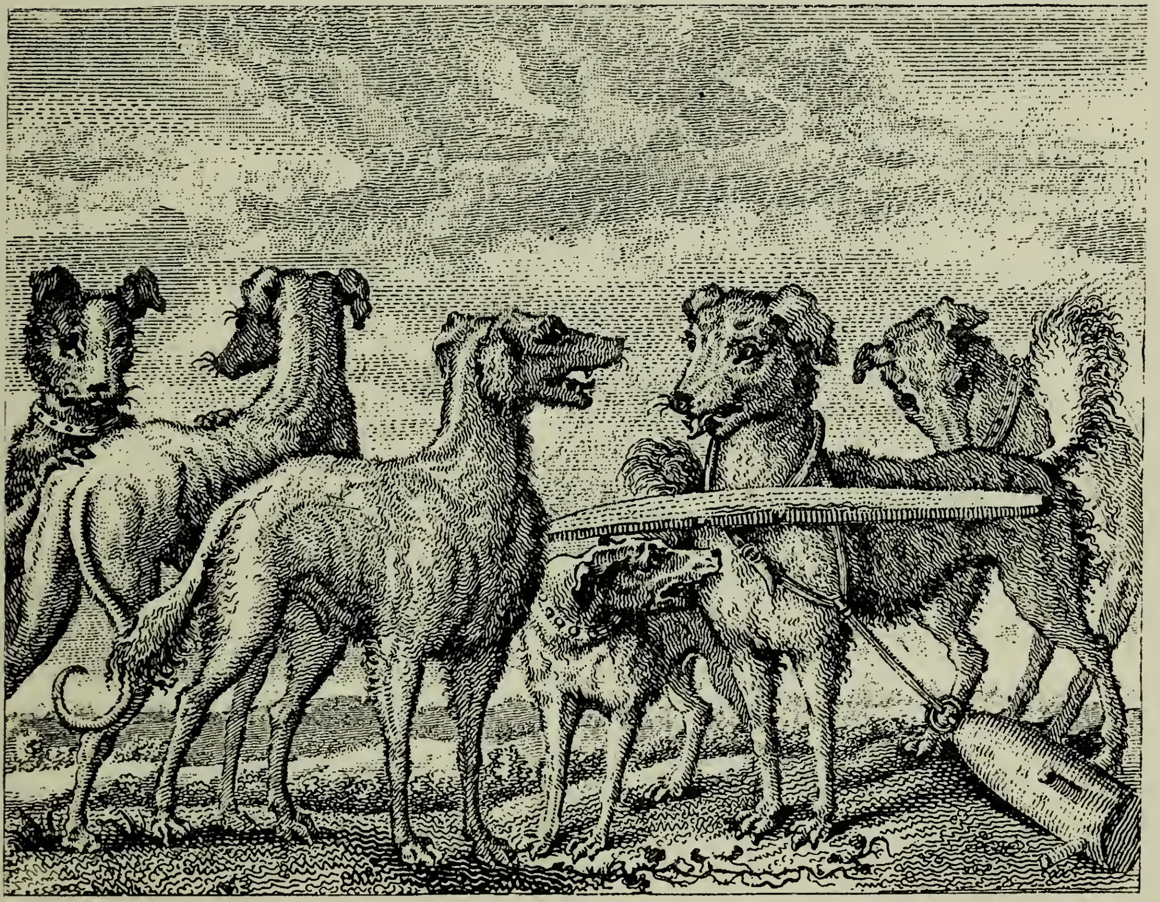
"Then crouch no more on suppliant knee,
But scorn with scorn outbrave;
A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave!"

William Wordsworth.

FABLE XXV.

THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG.

A CERTAIN man had a Dog, which was so curst and mischievous, that he was forced to fasten a heavy clog about his neck, to keep him from running at and worrying people. This the vain cur took for a badge of honourable distinction; and grew so insolent upon it, that he looked down with an air of scorn upon the neighbouring dogs, and refused to keep them company. But a sly old poacher, who was one of the gang, assured him, that he had no reason to value himself upon the favour he wore, since it was fixed upon him rather as a mark of disgrace than of honour.

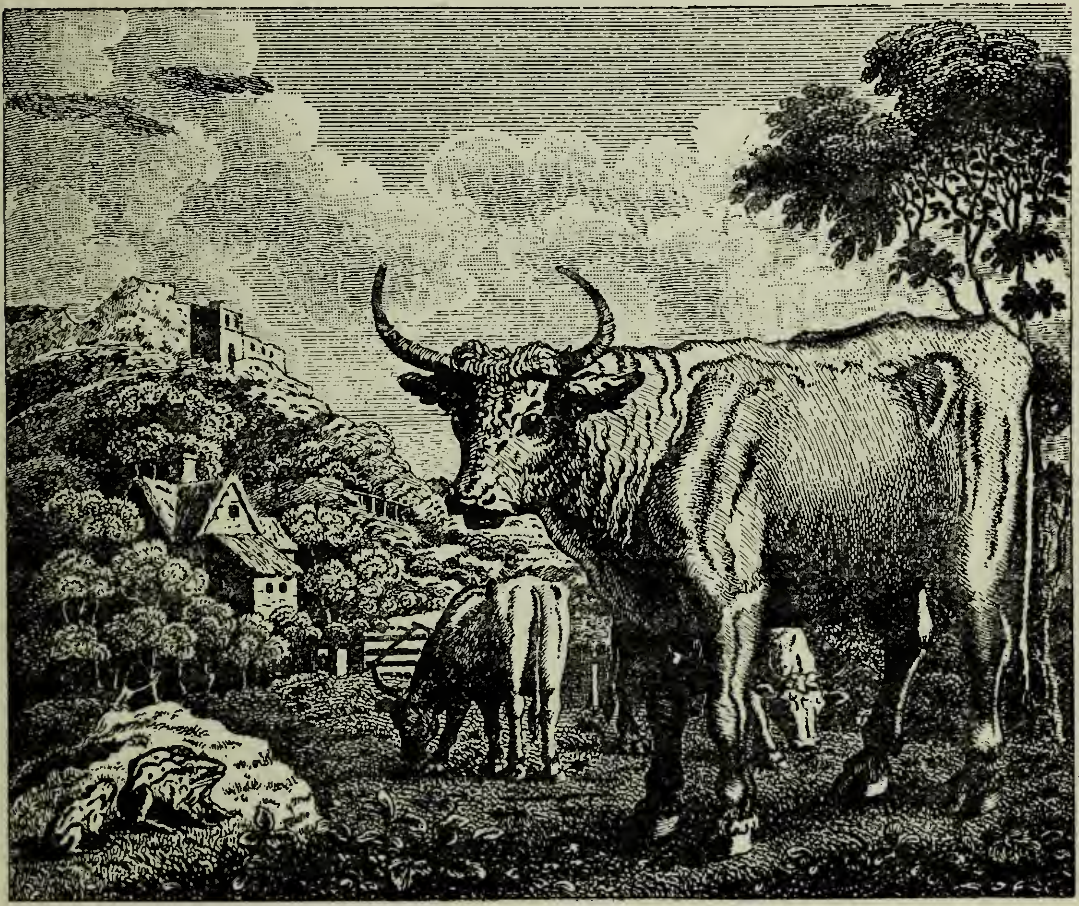


Man, know thyself! all wisdom centres there.

"A traveller, in his way to Italy, happening to pass at the foot of the Alps, found himself at last in a country where the inhabitants had each a large excrescence depending from the chin, like the pouch of a monkey. This deformity, as it was endemic, and the people little used to strangers, it had been the custom, time immemorial, to look upon as the greatest ornament of the human visage. Ladies grew toasts from the size of their chins, and none were regarded as pretty fellows but such whose faces were broadest at the bottom. It was Sunday; a country church was at hand, and our traveller was willing to perform the duties of the day. Upon his first appearance at the church door the eyes of all were naturally fixed upon the stranger; but what was their amazement, when they found that he actually wanted that emblem of beauty, a pursed chin! This was a defect that not a single creature had sufficient gravity (though they were noted for being grave) to withstand. Stifled bursts of laughter, winks, and whispers circulated from visage to visage, and the prismatic figure of the stranger's face was a fund of infinite gaiety; even the parson, equally remarkable for his gravity and chin, could hardly refrain joining in the good humour. Our traveller could no longer patiently continue an object for deformity to point at. 'Good folks,' said he, 'I perceive that I am the unfortunate cause of all this good humour. It is true I may have faults in abundance; but I shall never be induced to reckon my want of a swelled face among the number.'"—OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

FABLE XXVI.

THE OX AND THE FROG.



AN Ox, grazing in a meadow, chanced to set his foot among a parcel of young Frogs, and trod one of them to death. The rest informed their mother, when she came home, what had happened; telling her, that the beast which did it was the hugest creature that they ever saw in their lives. "What, was it so big?" says the old Frog, swelling and blowing up her speckled belly to a great degree. "Oh! bigger by a vast deal," say they. "And so big?" says she, straining herself yet more. "Indeed, mamma," say they, "if you were to burst yourself, you would never be so big." She strove yet again, and burst herself indeed.

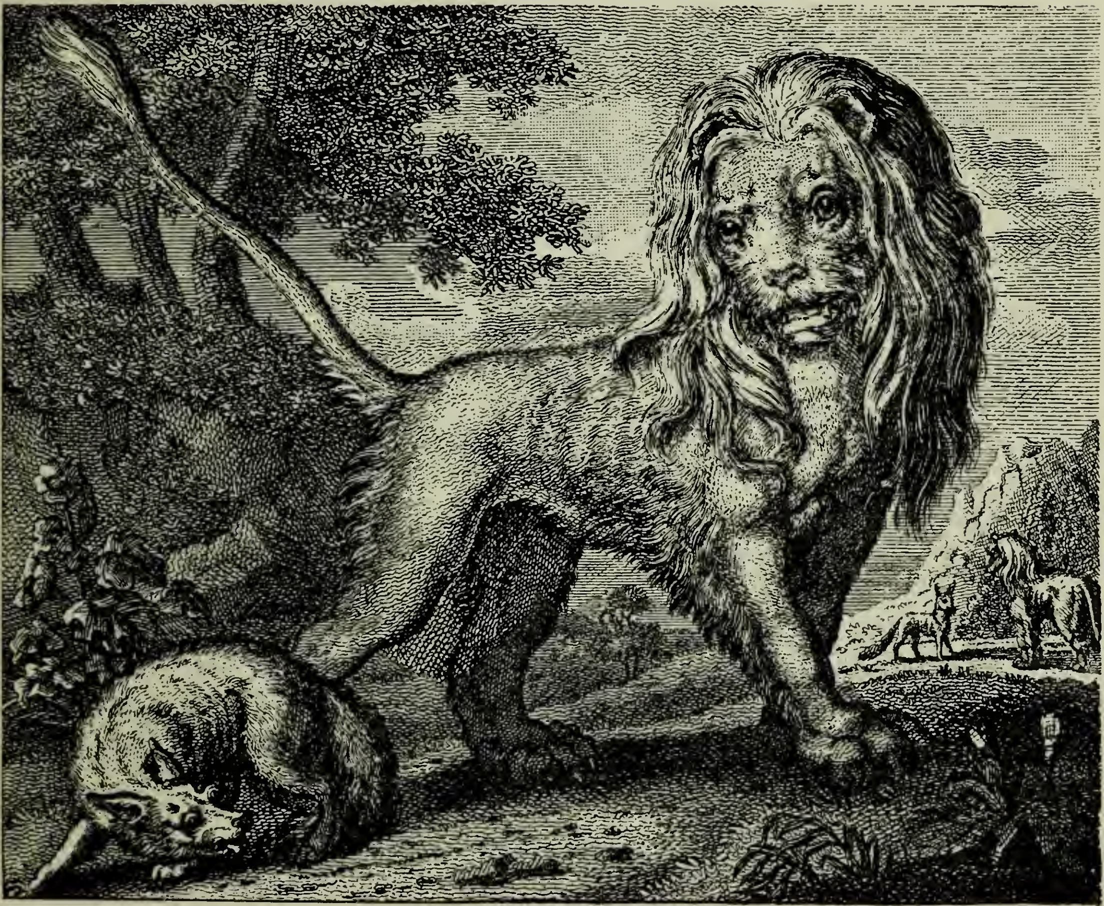
Rival not thy betters.

Whenever a man endeavours to live equal with one of a greater fortune than himself, he is sure to share a like fate with the Frog in the fable. How many vain people, of moderate easy circumstances, burst and come to nothing, by vying with those whose estates are more ample than their own! Sir Changeling Plumstock was possessed of a very considerable estate, devolved to him by the death of an old uncle, who had adopted him his heir. He had a false taste of happiness; and, without the least economy, trusting to the sufficiency of his vast revenue, was resolved to be outdone by nobody in showish grandeur and expensive living. He gave five thousand pounds for a piece of ground in the country to set a house upon; the building and furniture of which cost fifty thousand more; and his gardens were proportionably magnificent. Besides which, he thought himself under a necessity of buying out two or three tenements which stood in his neighbourhood, that he might have elbow-room enough. All this he could very well bear; and still might have been happy, had it not been for an unfortunate view which he one day happened to take of my Lord Castlebuilder's gardens, which consist of twenty acres, whereas his own were not above twelve. From that time he grew pensive; and before the ensuing winter gave five-and-thirty years' purchase for a dozen acres more to enlarge his gardens, built a couple of exorbitant greenhouses, and a large pavilion at the farther end of a terrace-walk. The bare repairs and superintendencies of all which call for the remaining part of his income. He is mortgaged pretty deep, and pays nobody; but, being a privileged person, resides altogether at a private cheap lodging in the city of Westminster.

FABLE XXVII.

THE FOX AND THE LION.

THE first time the Fox saw the Lion, he fell down at his feet, and was ready to die with fear. The second time, he took courage and could even bear to look upon him. The third time he had the impudence to come up to him, to salute him, and to enter into familiar conversation with him.



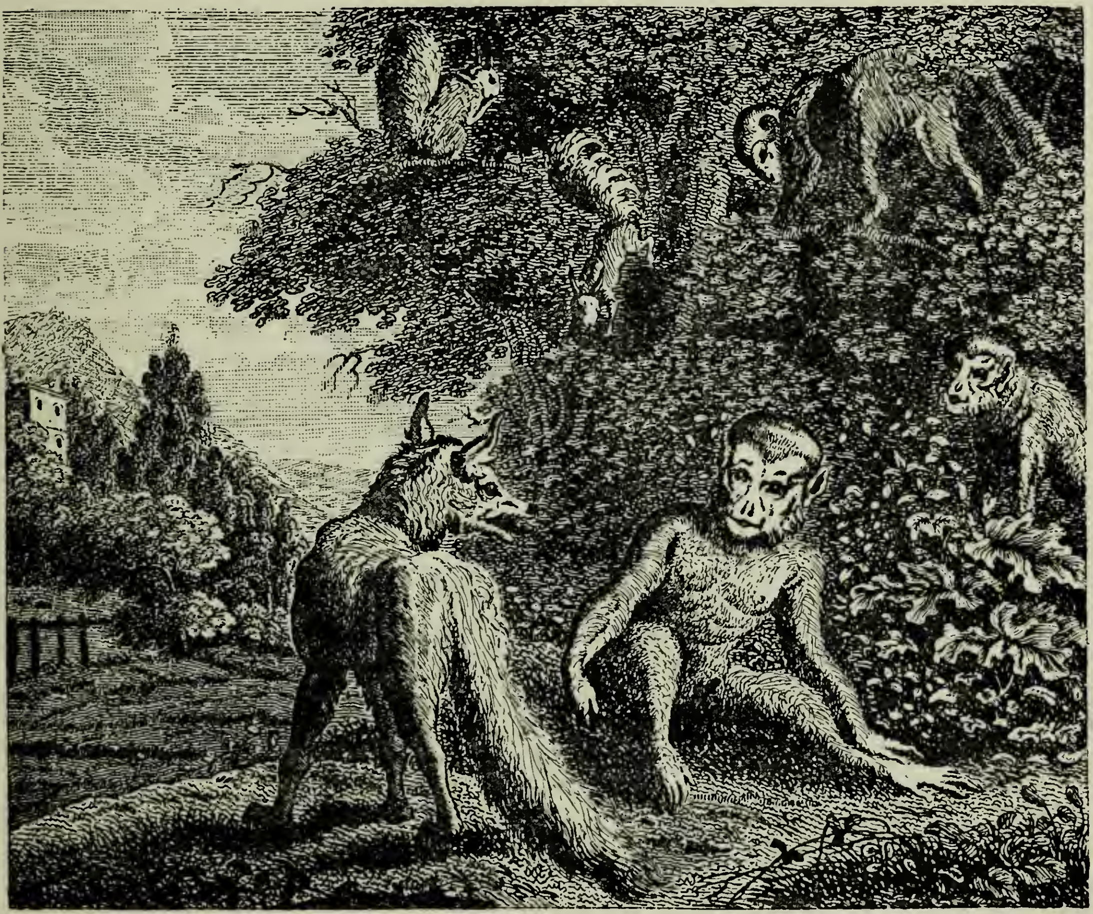
Familiarity breeds contempt.

From this fable we may observe the two extremes in which we may fail as to a proper behaviour towards our superiors: the one is a bashfulness, proceeding either from a vicious guilty mind, or a timorous rusticity; the other, an overbearing impudence, which assumes more than becomes it, and so renders the person insufferable to the conversation of well-bred, reasonable people. But there is this difference between the bashfulness that arises from a want of education, and the shamefacedness that accompanies conscious guilt: the first, by a continuance of time and a nearer acquaintance, may be ripened into a proper liberal behaviour; the other no sooner finds an easy practicable access, but it throws off all manner of reverence, grows every day more and more familiar, and branches out into the utmost indecency and irregularity. Indeed, there are many occasions which may happen to cast an awe, or even a terror, upon our minds at first view, without any just and reasonable grounds; but upon a little recollection, or a nearer insight, we recover ourselves, and can appear indifferent and unconcerned, where, before, we were ready to sink under a load of diffidence and fear. We should, upon such occasions, use our endeavours to regain a due degree of steadiness and resolution; but, at the same time, we must have a care that our efforts in that respect do not force the balance too much, and make it rise to an unbecoming freedom and an offensive familiarity.

FABLE XXVIII.

THE APE AND THE FOX.

THE Ape meeting the Fox one day, humbly requested him to give him a piece of his fine long brush tail, for a protection against the inclemency of the weather; "For," says he, "Reynard, you have already more than you have occasion for, and a great part of it even drags along in the dirt." The Fox answered, "That as to his having too much, that was more than he knew; but be it as it would, he had rather sweep the ground with his tail as long as he lived, than deprive himself of the least bit to make up the Ape's deficiencies."



And what's impossible can't be,
And never, never comes to pass.

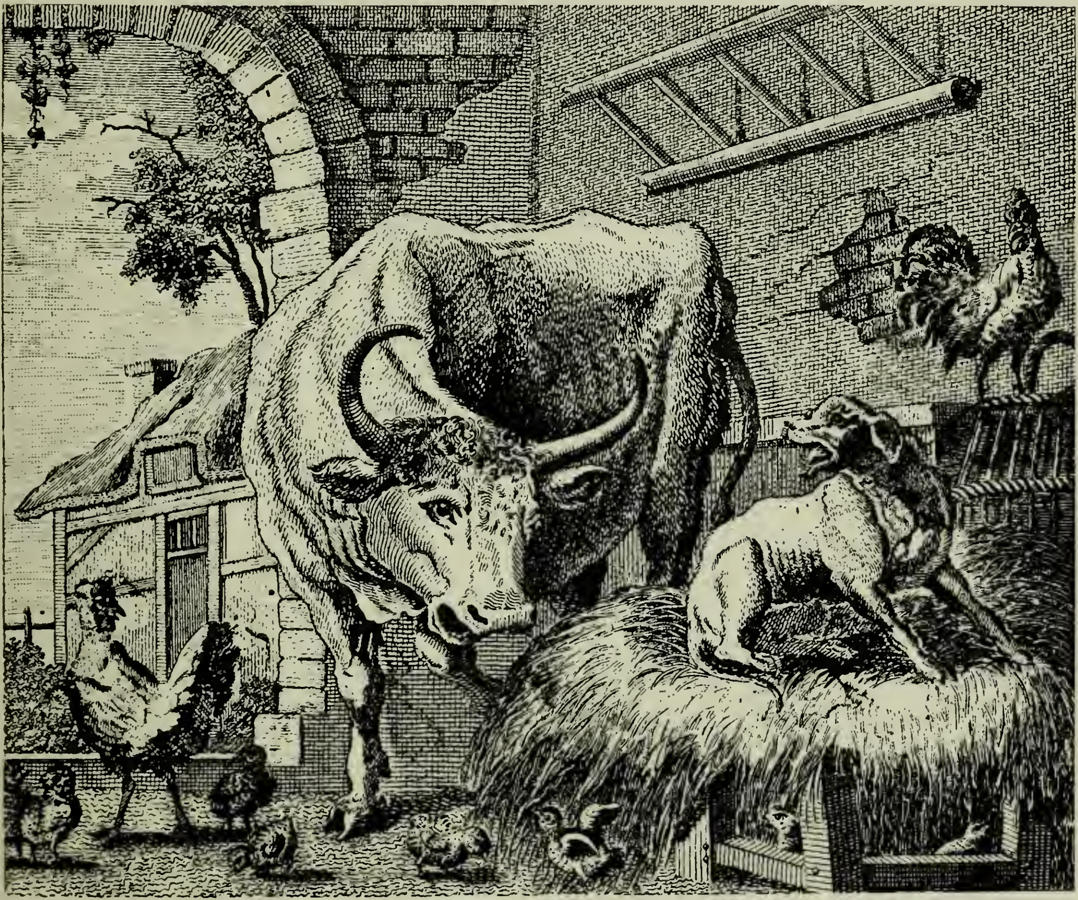
"There are certain rules to be observed, as well in asking as denying. Things against Nature are unreasonable on both sides. Things impossible are ridiculous in the very proposal; and things which the one cannot spare, and the other will be never the better for, fall naturally within the Compass of Exceptions: That is to say, those things that we know not what to do withal if we had them; and those things, again, which another cannot part with, but to his own loss and shame. These points are the very conditions of this fable. Here's a general caution against extravagant desires, and yet let the refusal be never so just, it is possible, however, that a man may oppose a most unconscionable request for an unjustifiable reason; as in the case for the purpose of an ill-natured denial, out of a dislike of the man, rather than of the thing itself.

"The application of this fable to avarice, that will part with nothing, seems to be wrested; for it strikes more properly upon the folly of peoples not being satisfied with the appointments of Nature. An *ape with a tail* would be as scandalous as a *fox without* one. Why should not any one creature envy the whole, as well as any one part of another? And why should not an *ape* be as much troubled that he has no *wings*, as that he has no *tail*? This grumbling humour has envy in it, avarice, and ingratitude, and sets up itself, in fine, against all the works of the creation."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE XXIX.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

A DOG was lying upon a manger full of hay. An Ox, being hungry, came near, and offered to eat of the hay; but the envious, ill-natured cur, getting up and snarling at him, would not suffer him to touch it. Upon which the Ox, in the bitterness of his heart, said, " A curse light on thee, for a malicious wretch, who wilt neither eat hay thyself, nor suffer others to do it."



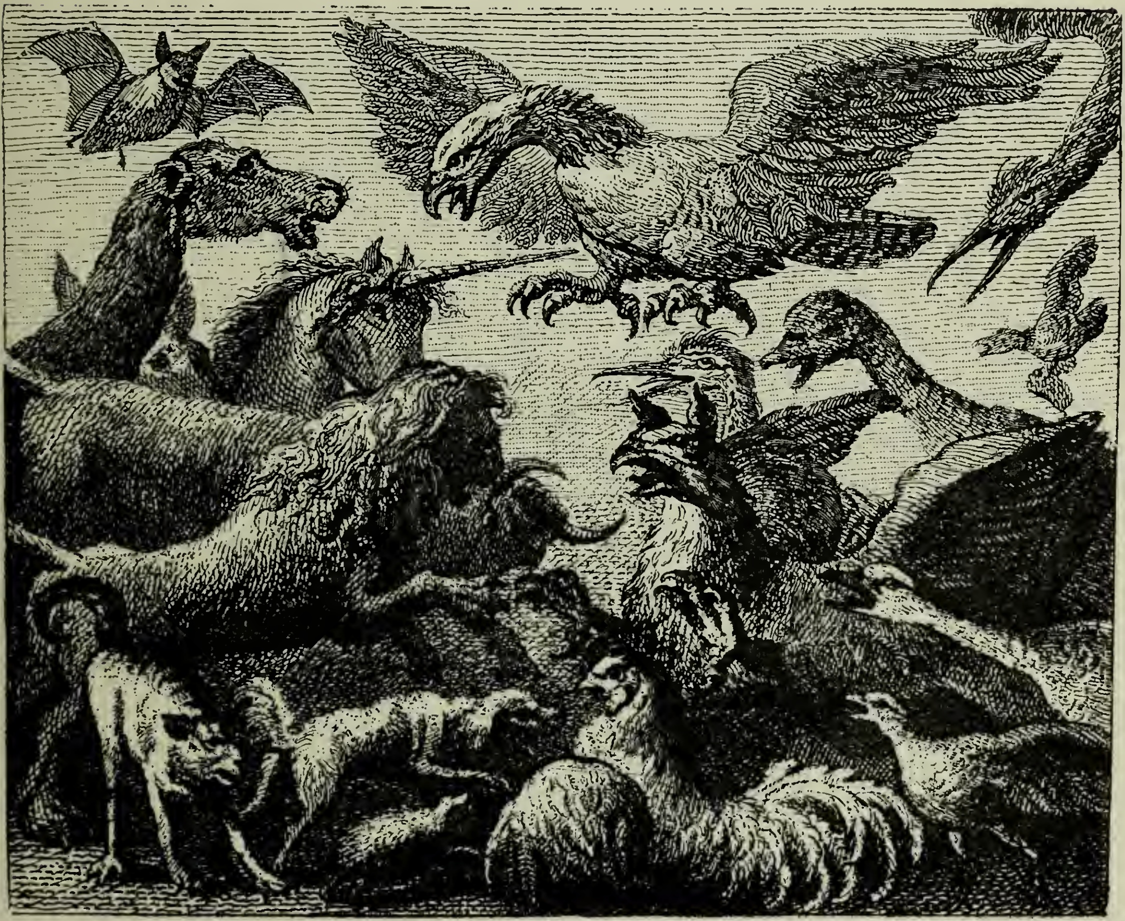
Without good nature, man is but a better kind of vermin.

"It is not in everybody's power, because he has not a fortune answerable to it, to form a standing habit of charity, by redressing the injured, relieving the distressed, and cherishing men of merit; but it is in everybody's power to beget in himself this lovely disposition of mind, by studying to adjust his temper to theirs with whom he lives, by complying with their humours as far as he innocently can, by soothing their distresses, bearing with their infirmities, and by incommoding himself in some points to gratify others. On the contrary, the indulgence of an occasional fit of ill humour paves the way to an habitually bad temper. And to those who think it a small matter, Solon's answer is a very just one: 'Yes, but custom is a great one.' Did we consider seriously that, as often as we are exerting a spirit of needless contradiction, or venting an ill-natured wit to mortify those about us, we are cherishing a principle of ill will, the very temper of the damned, it would, it is to be hoped, put some stop to this practice. But here the misfortune lies: men are more ambitious to display the abilities of the head, than to cultivate the good qualities of the heart; though the latter are in everybody's power, the former few have any title to."—JEREMIAH SEED.

FABLE XXX.

THE BIRDS, THE BEASTS, AND THE BAT.

ONCE upon a time there commenced a fierce war between the Birds and the Beasts; when the Bat, taking advantage of his ambiguous make, hoped, by that means, to live secure in a state of neutrality, and save his bacon. It was not long before the forces on each side met, and gave a battle; and their animosities running very high, a bloody slaughter ensued. The Bat, at the beginning of the day, thinking the Birds most likely to carry it, lifted himself among them; but kept fluttering at a little distance, that he might the better



observe, and take his measures accordingly. However, after some time spent in the action, the army of the Beasts seeming to prevail, he went entirely over to them, and endeavoured to convince them, by the affinity which he had to a mouse, that he was by nature a beast, and would always continue firm and true to their interest. His plea was admitted; but, in the end, the advantage turning completely on the side of the Birds, under the admirable conduct and courage of their general the eagle, the Bat, to save his life, and escape the disgrace of falling into the hands of his deserted friends, betook himself to flight; and ever since, skulking in caves and hollow trees all day, as if ashamed to shew himself, he never appears till the dusk of the evening, when all the feathered inhabitants of the air are gone to roost.

Round dealing is the honour of man's nature.

"O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What! do I fear myself? there's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes; I am.
Then fly. What! from myself? Great reason why;
Lest I revenge. What! myself upon myself?
Alack! I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deed committed by myself!
I am a villain. Yet I lie; I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree,
All several sins, all used in each degree,

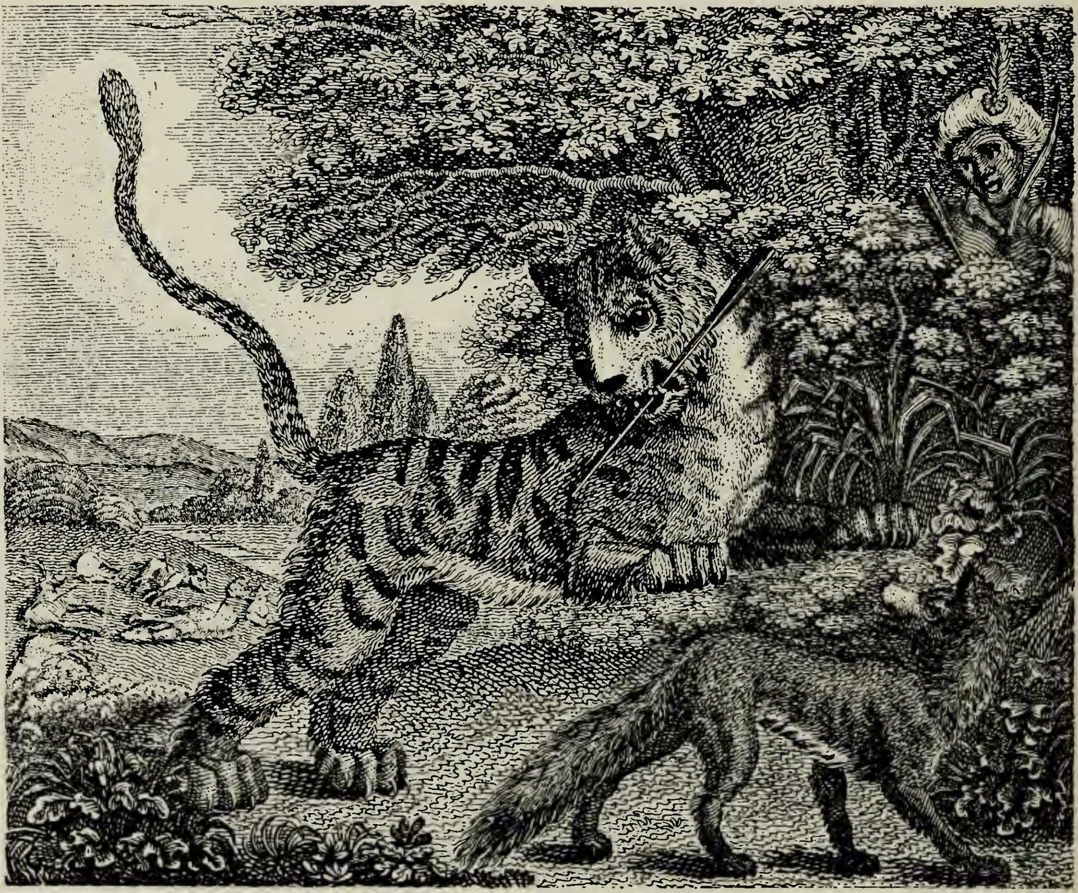
Throng to the bar, crying all, 'Guilty! guilty!'
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die, no soul shall pity me;
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?"

King Richard III.

FABLE XXXI.

The Fox and the Tiger.

A skilful archer coming into the woods, directed his arrows so successfully, that he slew many wild beasts, and pursued several others. This put the whole savage kind into a fearful consternation, and made them fly to the most retired thickets for refuge. At last, the Tiger resumed a courage, and, bidding them not to be afraid, said that he alone would engage the enemy; telling them, they might depend upon his valour and strength to revenge their wrongs. In the midst of these threats, while he was lashing himself with his tail,



and tearing up the ground for anger, an arrow pierced his ribs, and hung by its barbed point in his side. He set up an hideous and loud roar, occasioned by the anguish which he felt, and endeavoured to draw out the painful dart with his teeth; when the Fox, approaching him, inquired, with an air of surprise, who it was that could have strength and courage enough to wound so mighty and valorous a beast!—"Ah!" says the Tiger, "I was mistaken in my reckoning: it was that invincible man yonder."

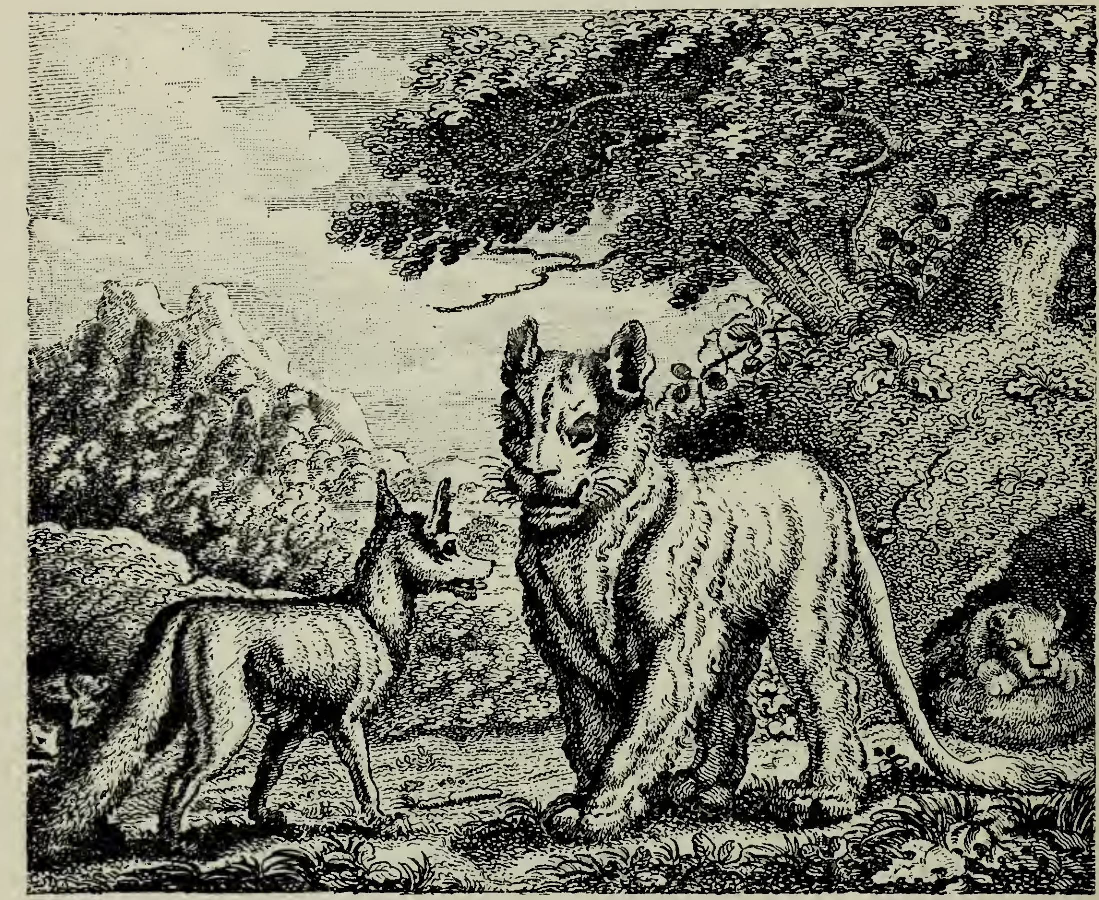
Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off.

"Boldness without counsel, is no better than an impetus, which is commonly worsted by conduct and design. There's no man so daring but some time or other he meets with his match. The moral, in short, holds forth this doctrine, that reason is too hard for force, and that temerity puts a man off his guard. 'Tis a high point of honour, philosophy, and virtue, for a man to be so present to himself as to be always provided against all encounters and accidents whatsoever; but this will not hinder him from inquiring diligently into the character, strength, motions, and designs of an enemy. The Tiger lost his life for want of this circumspection."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE XXXII.

THE LIONESS AND THE FOX.

THE Lioness and the Fox meeting together, fell into discourse; and the conversation turning upon the breeding and the fruitfulness of some living creatures above others, the Fox could not forbear taking the opportunity of observing to the Lioness, that, for her part, she thought Foxes were as happy in that respect as almost any other creatures; for that they bred constantly once a year, if not oftener, and always had a good litter of cubs at every birth: "and yet," says she, "there



are those who are never delivered of more than one at a time, and that perhaps not above once or twice through their whole life, who hold up their noses, and value themselves so much upon it, that they think all other creatures beneath them, and scarce worthy to be spoken to." The Lioness, who all the while perceived at whom this reflection pointed, was fired with resentment, and with a good deal of vehemence replied—"What you have observed may be true, and that not without reason. You produce a great many at a litter, and often; but what are they? Foxes. I indeed have but one at a time, but you should remember that this one is a Lion."

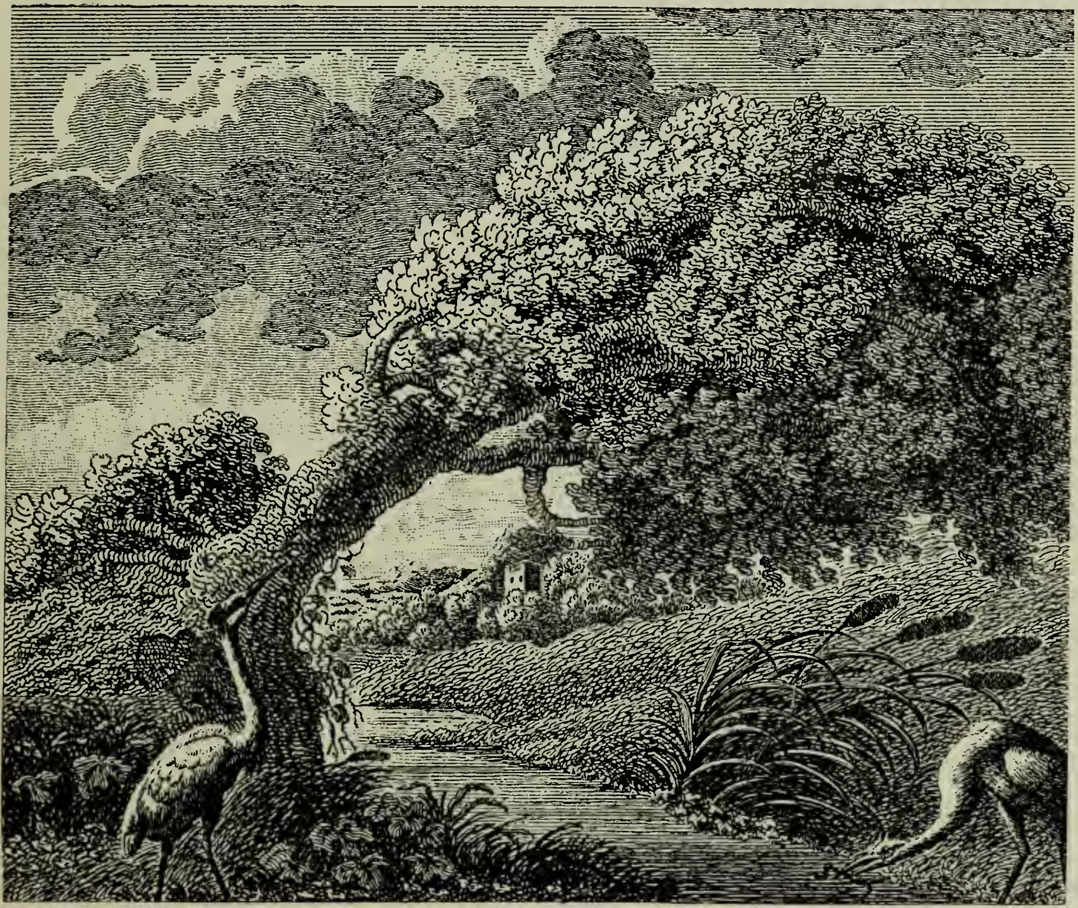
"*Where yet was ever found a mother,*
Who'd give her booby for another."—GAY.

"There are more fools in the world than wise men, and more knaves than honest men: so that it is not number, but excellency, that enhances the value of any thing. The most copious writers are commonly the arrantest scribblers; and in so much talking, the tongue is apt to run before the wit: *In many words there is folly, but a word in season is like apples of gold in pictures of silver:* says the Oracle of Truth itself. And we have it from the same authority, that our very *prayers*, when they are loud and long, are in the sight of Heaven no better than so much babbling; and that they have more in them of hypocrisy and ostentation, than of affection and judgment. The great Creator of the Universe, whose single *fiat* was sufficient to have made ten thousand worlds in the twinkling of an eye, allowed himself six days yet for the finishing of his purpose: Paused upon every day's work, considered of it, reviewed it, and pronounced it *good*, and so proceeded. Right reason moves, in some proportion, by the same steps and degrees with this inimitable example: it deliberates, projects, executes, weighs, and approves. Nature does nothing in a huddle, and human prudence should govern itself by the same measures. A plurality of voices, 'tis true, carries the question in all our debates, but rather as an expedient for peace than an eviction of the right; for there are millions of errors to one reason, and truth; and a *point* is not so easy to be hit. In a word, the old saying is a shrewd one,—that *wise men propose, and fools determine.* Take the world to pieces, and there are a thousand sots to one philosopher; and as many swarms of flies to one eagle. *Lions* do not come into the world in *litters.*"—Sir Roger L'Estrange.

FABLE XXXIII.

THE OAK AND THE REED.

AN Oak, which hung over the bank of a river, was blown down by a violent storm of wind; and as it was carried along by the stream, some of its boughs brushed against a Reed which grew near the shore. This struck the Oak with a thought of admiration; and he could not forbear asking the Reed how he came to stand so secure and unhurt in a tempest, which had been furious enough to tear an Oak up by the roots? "Why," says the Reed, "I secure myself by putting on a behaviour quite contrary to what you do: instead of



being stubborn and stiff, and confiding in my strength, I yield and bend to the blast, and let it go over me; knowing how vain and fruitless it would be to resist."

Bend or Break.

THE OAK AND THE BROOM:

A PASTORAL.

"His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.
One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This tale the shepherd told:—

"'I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon—
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed:

"'Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay
Along this mountain's edge,
The frost hath wrought both night and day
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a thing as you!

"'You are preparing, as before,
To deck your slender shape;
And yet, just three years back—no more—
You had a strange escape.
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
In thunder down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way:
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'Tis hanging to this day!

"'The thing had better been asleep,
Whatever thing it were,
Or breeze, or bird, or dog, or sheep,
That first did plant you there.
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon,
Will perish in one hour.

"'From me this friendly warning take'—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus to keep herself awake
Did gently interpose:
'My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

"'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam!
This spot is my paternal home,

It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year
Here spent his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

" 'Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This plant can never die.

" 'The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy, which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

" Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed:
But in the branches of the Oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there.

"One night, my children! from the north
There came a furious blast;

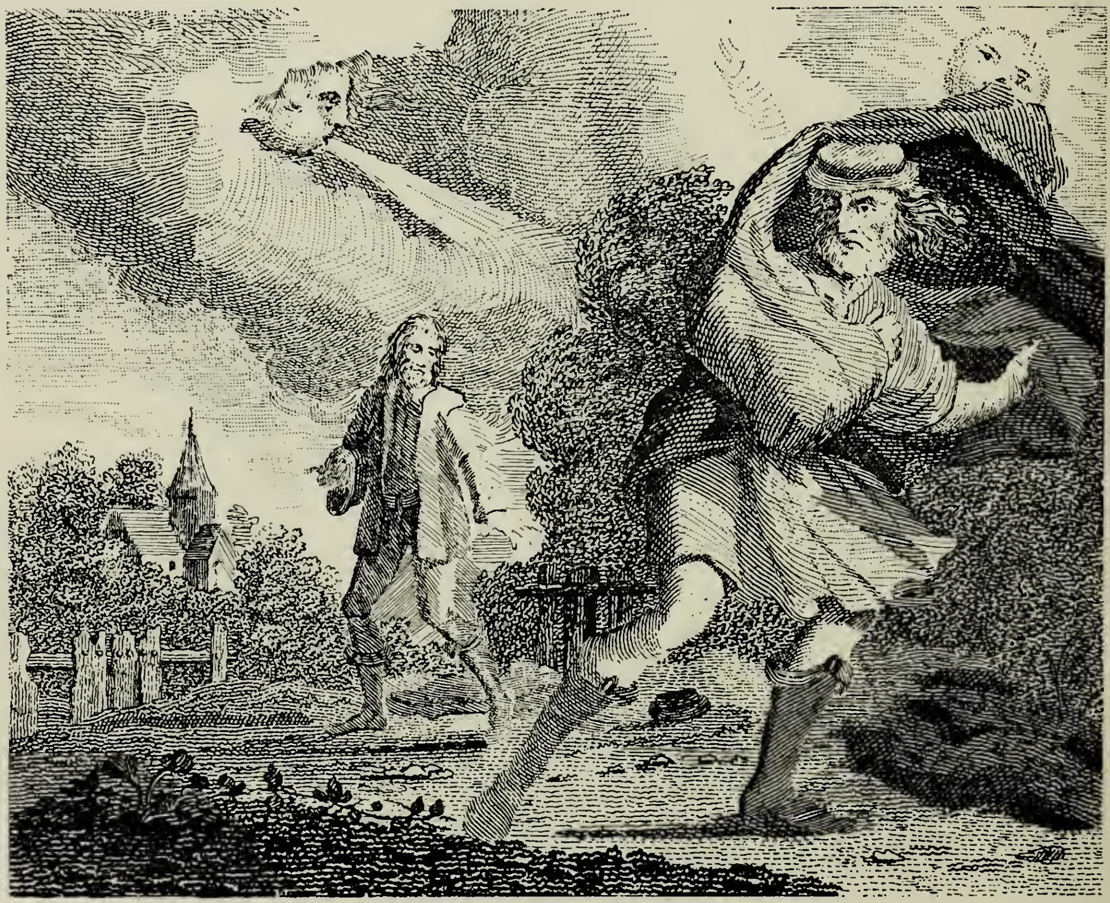
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day."

William Wordsworth.

FABLE XXXIV.

THE WIND AND THE SUN.

A DISPUTE once arose betwixt the north Wind and the Sun, about the superiority of their power; and they agreed to try their strength upon a traveller, which should be able to get his cloak off first. The north Wind began, and blew a very cold blast, accompanied with a sharp, driving shower. But this, and whatever else he could do, instead of making the man quit his cloak, obliged him to gird it about his body as close as possible. Next came the Sun, who, breaking out from a thick watery cloud, drove away the cold vapours from



the sky, and darted his warm, sultry beams upon the head of the poor weather-beaten traveller. The man growing faint with the heat, and unable to endure it any longer, first throws off his heavy cloak, and then flies for protection to the shade of a neighbouring grove.

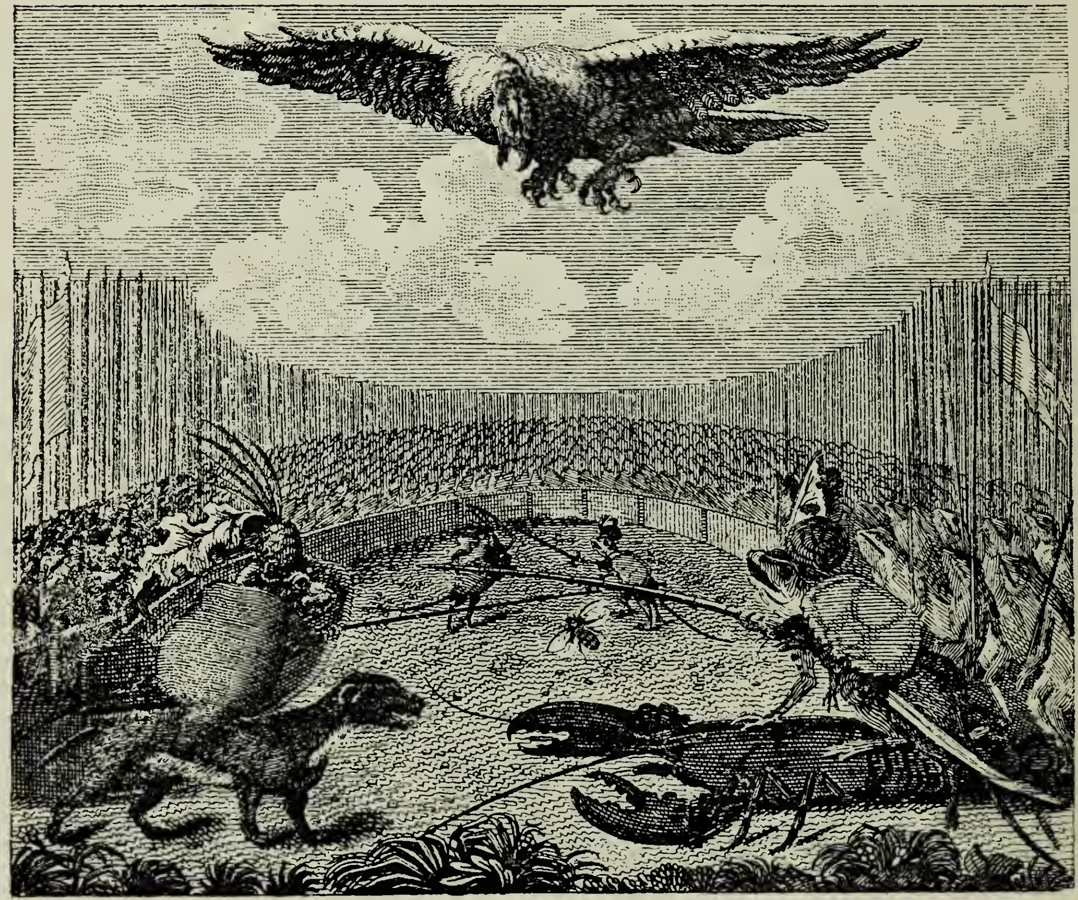
A soft answer turneth away wrath.

A stern man will often harden his heart to all the arguments and appeals of those who may address themselves to him on the basis of reason or force, and yet yield to the softer appeals of affection. Coriolanus, driven from Rome by the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens, returned with a powerful and conquering army, determined to reduce the pride of the city, and revenge himself on those who had expelled him. The Romans, disorganised and leaderless, agreed to send ambassadors to treat for peace. Coriolanus answered them with bitterness and high resentment of the injuries done him, and refused their offers. Again the Senate sent an embassy to entreat him to forget his resentment and withdraw his army, but with no better success. Then, as a last resort, they sent all the priests and diviners in their robes, with orders to exert their utmost endeavours to persuade him to desist from the war; but they, too, met with the same unwavering refusal. The fate of Rome seemed fixed, when Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus, with Virgilia his wife and his children, went with the other matrons to the Volscian camp. The sight of them produced, even in the enemy, compassion and a reverential silence. Coriolanus endeavoured to retain his wonted sternness and inexorable temper, though he perceived that his wife was at the head of them. But, unable to resist the emotions of affection, he descended from his seat and ran to meet them. First he embraced his mother for a considerable time, and afterwards his wife and children, neither refraining from tears nor any other instance of natural tenderness. Volumnia then addressed him, and, appealing to the gratitude that he owed to his parents, implored him on her knees to go no further; upon which Coriolanus, crying out "O Mother! what is it you have done?" raised her from the ground, and, tenderly pressing her hand, continued, "you have gained a victory fortunate for your country, but ruinous to me. I go, vanquished by you alone."

FABLE XXXV.

THE KITE, THE FROG, AND THE MOUSE.

THERE was once a great emulation between the Frog and the Mouse, which should be master of the fen, and wars ensued upon it. But the crafty Mouse, lurking under the grass in ambuscade, made sudden sallies, and often surprised the enemy at a disadvantage. The frog, excelling in strength, and being more able to leap abroad and take the field, challenged the Mouse to single combat. The Mouse accepts the challenge; and each of them entered the lists, armed with a point of a bulrush instead of a spear. A Kite, sailing in the



air, beheld them afar off; and, while they were eagerly bent upon each other, and pressing on to the duel, this fatal enemy descended souse upon them, and with her crooked talons carried off both the champions.

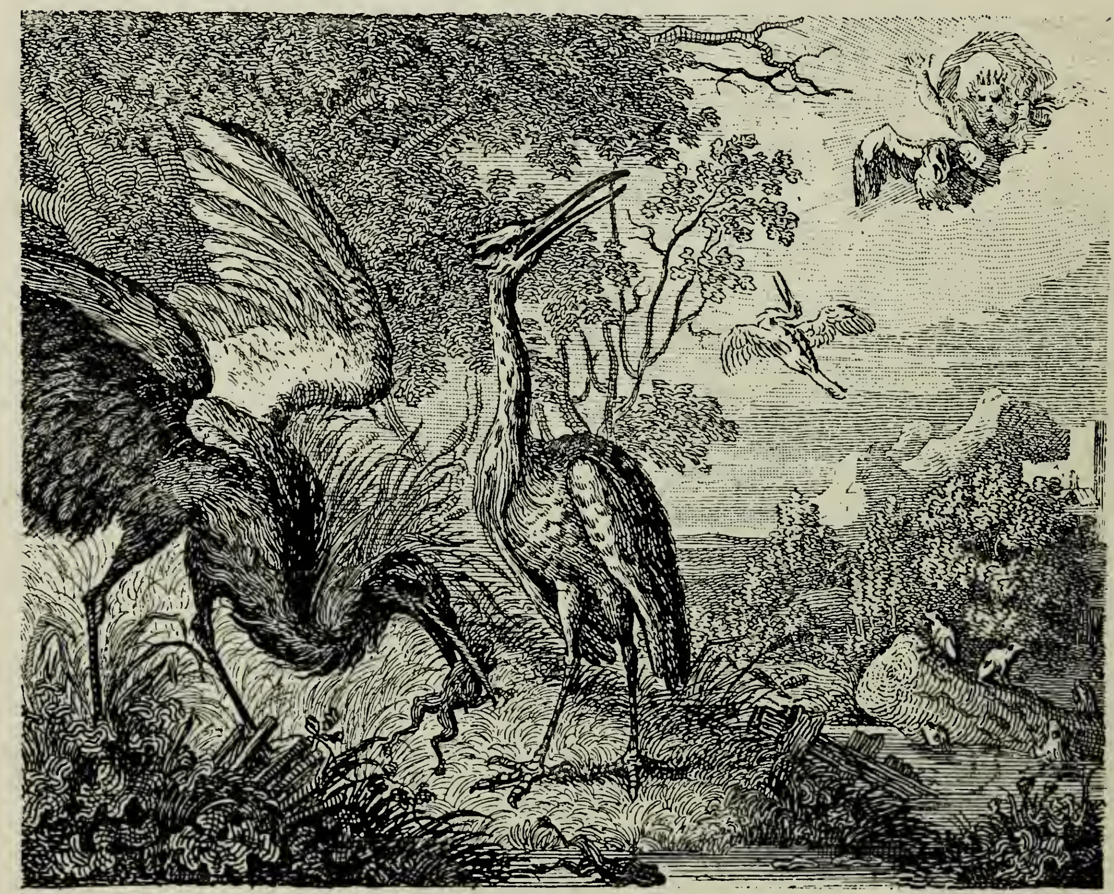
'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

"This is no more than what we see daily in popular factions, where pragmatical fools commonly begin the squabble, and crafty knaves reap the benefit of it. There is very rarely any quarrel, either public or private, whether betwixt persons or parties, but a third watches, and hopes to be the better for it.

"And all is but according to the old proverb, *While two dogs are fighting for a bone, a third runs away with it. Divide and govern* is a rule of State that we see confirmed and supported by daily practice and experience, so that 'tis none of the slightest arguments for the necessity of a common peace, that the litigants tear one another to pieces for the benefit of some third interest that makes advantage of their disagreement. This is no more than what we find upon experience through the whole history of the world in all notable changes and revolutions; that is to say, the contendents have been still made a prey to the third party. And this has not been only the fate and event of popular quarrels, but the punishment of them; for the judgment still treads upon the heel of the wickedness."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE XXXVI.

THE FROGS DESIRING A KING.



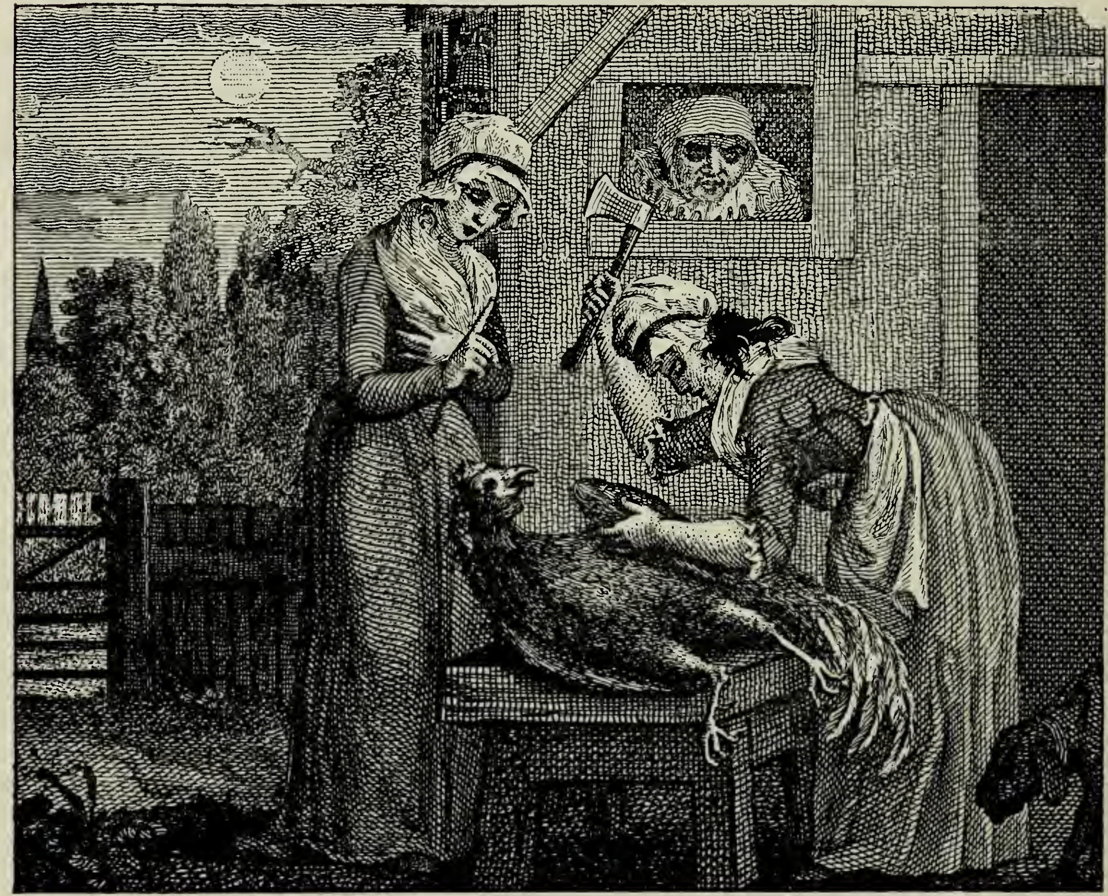
THE Frogs, living an easy free life everywhere among the lakes and ponds, assembled together, one day, in a very tumultuous manner, and petitioned Jupiter to let them have a King, who might inspect their morals, and make them live a little honester. Jupiter, being at that time in pretty good humour, was pleased to laugh heartily at their ridiculous request; and, throwing a little log down into the pool, cried, "There is a King for you." The sudden splash which this made, by its fall into the water, at first terrified them so exceedingly, that they were afraid to come near it. But in a little time, seeing it lay still without moving, they ventured, by degrees, to approach it; and at last, finding there was no danger, they leaped upon it; and, in short, treated it as familiarly as they pleased. But, not contented with so insipid a King as this was, they sent their deputies to petition again for another sort of one; for this they neither did nor could like. Upon that he sent them a stork, who, without any ceremony, fell a devouring and eating them up, one after another, as fast as he could. Then they applied themselves privately to Mercury, and got him to speak to Jupiter in their behalf, that he would be so good as to bless them again with another King, or restore them to their former state. "No," says he; "since it was their own choice, let the obstinate wretches suffer the punishment due to their folly."

The stone that is rolling can gather no moss;
For master and servant oft changing is loss.

It is pretty extraordinary to find a fable of this kind finished with so bold and yet polite a turn by Phædrus: one who attained his freedom by the favour of Augustus, and wrote it in the time of Tiberius; who were, successively, tyrannical usurpers of the Roman government. If we may take his word for it, Æsop spoke it upon this occasion. When the commonwealth of Athens flourished under good wholesome laws of its own enacting, they relied so much upon the security of their liberty, that they negligently suffered it to run out into licentiousness. And factions happening to be fomented among them by designing people, much about the same time, Pisistratus took that opportunity to make himself master of their citadel and liberties both together. The Athenians finding themselves in a state of slavery, though their tyrant happened to be a very merciful one, yet could not bear the thoughts of it; so that Æsop, where there was no remedy, prescribes to them patience, by the example of the foregoing fable; and adds, at last, "Wherefore, my dear countrymen, be contented with your present condition, bad as it is, for fear a change should be worse."

FABLE XXXVII.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER MAIDS.



A CERTAIN Old Woman had several Maids, whom she used to call up to their work, every morning, at the crowing of the cock. The Wenches, who found it grievous to have their sweet sleep disturbed so early, combined together, and killed the cock; thinking that, when the alarm was gone, they might enjoy themselves in their warm beds a little longer. The Old Woman, grieved for the loss of her cock, and having, by some means or other, discovered the whole plot, was resolved to be even with them; for, from that time, she obliged them to rise constantly at midnight.

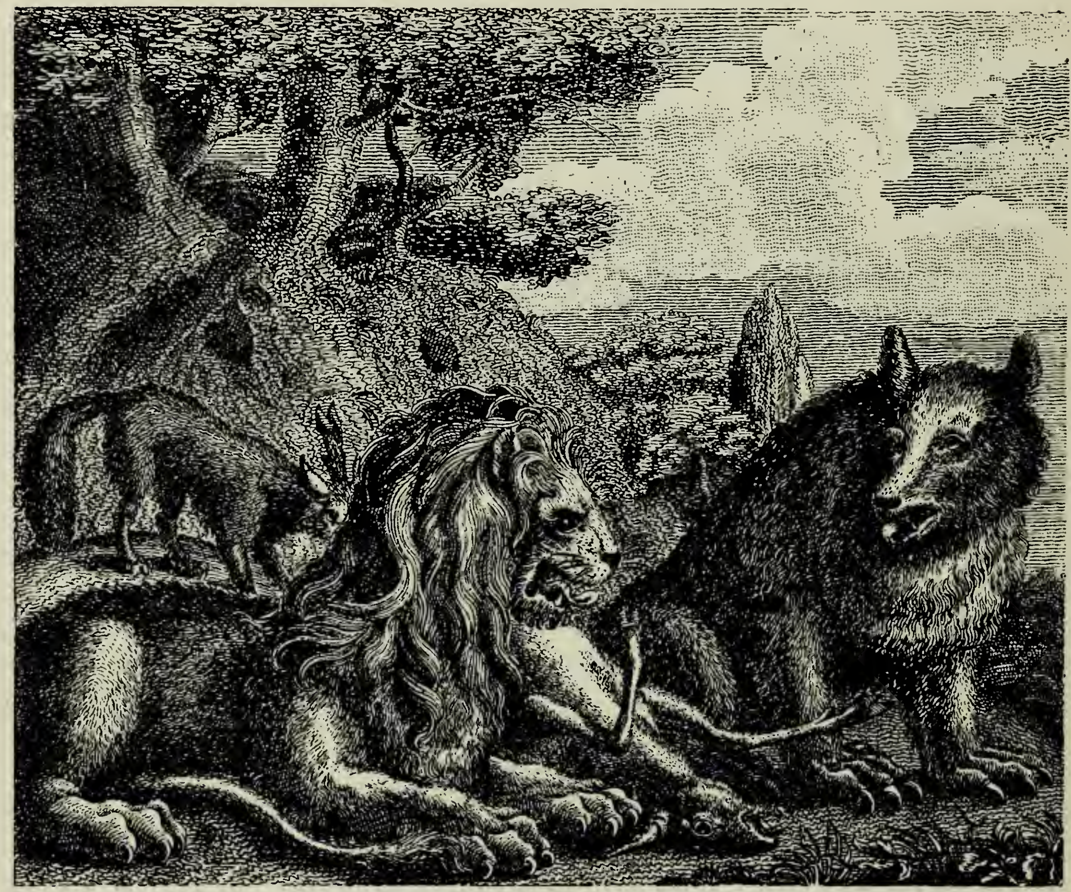
Out of the frying-pan into the fire.

It can never be expected that things should be, in all respects, agreeable to our wishes; and, if they are not very bad indeed, we ought, in many cases, to be contented with them; lest when, through impatience, we precipitately quit our present condition of life, we may to our sorrow find, with the old saying, that seldom comes a better. Before we attempt any alteration of moment, we should be certain what state it will produce; for, when things are already bad, to make them worse by trying experiments is an argument of great weakness and folly, and is sure to be attended with a too late repentance. Grievances, if really such, ought by all means to be redressed, provided we can be assured of doing it with success; but we had better, at any time, bear with some inconvenience, than make our condition worse by attempting to mend it.

FABLE XXXVIII.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX.

A LION and a Bear fell together by the ears over the carcass of a fawn which they found in the forest, their title to him being to be decided by force of arms. The battle was severe and tough on both sides, and they held it out, tearing and worrying one another so long, that, what with wounds and fatigue, they were so faint and weary they were not able to strike another stroke. Thus, while they lay upon the ground, panting, and lolling out their tongues, a Fox chanced to pass by that way, who, perceiving how the case stood, very



impudently stept in between them, seized the booty which they had all this while been contending for, and carried it off. The two combatants, who lay and beheld all this, without having strength enough to stir and prevent it, were only wise enough to make this reflection: "Behold the fruits of our strife and contention! that villain, the Fox, bears away the prize, and we ourselves have deprived each other of the power to recover it from him."

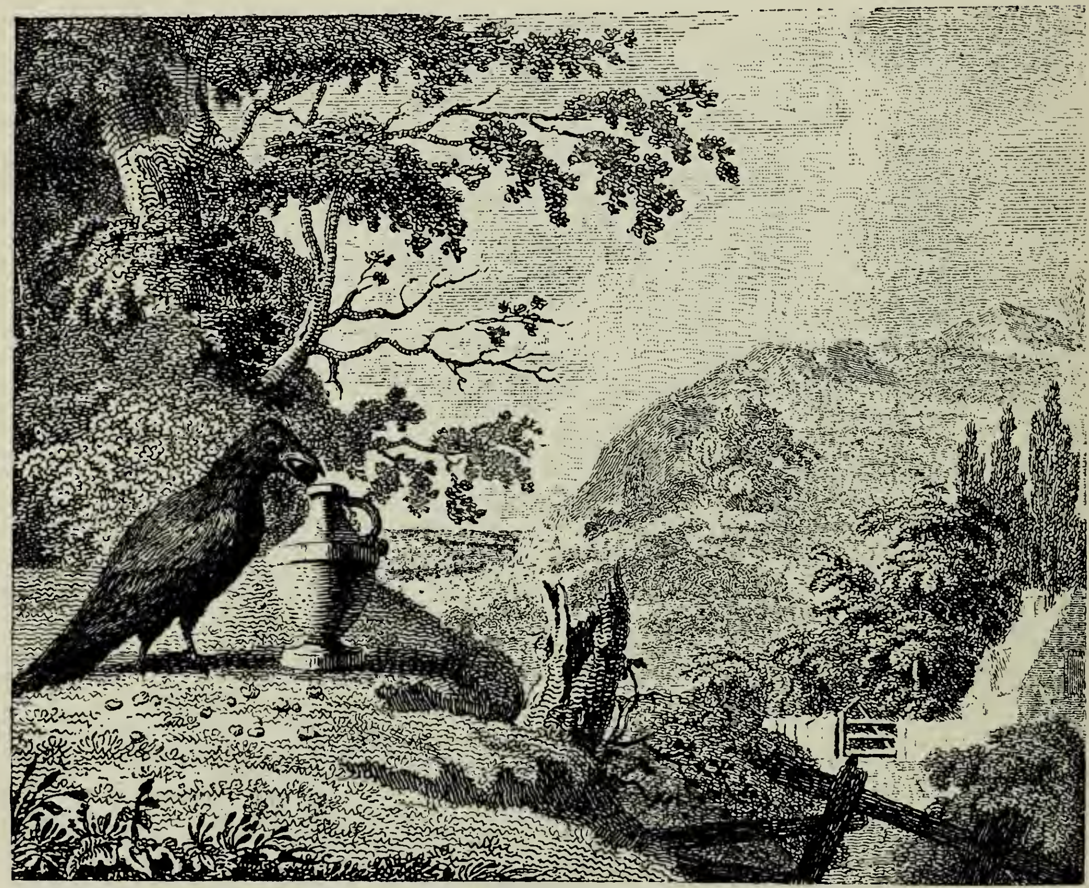
Grasp all—lose all.

"This is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men. A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not the power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease."—*Ecclesiastes* vi. 1, 2.

FABLE XXXIX.

THE CROW AND THE PITCHER.

A CROW, ready to die with thirst, flew with joy to a Pitcher, which he beheld at some distance. When he came, he found water in it indeed, but so near the bottom that, with all his stooping and straining, he was not able to reach it. Then he endeavoured to overturn the Pitcher, that so at least he might be able to get a little of it. But his strength was not sufficient for this. At last, seeing some pebbles lie near the place, he cast them one by one into the Pitcher; and thus, by degrees, raised the water up to the very brim, and satisfied his thirst



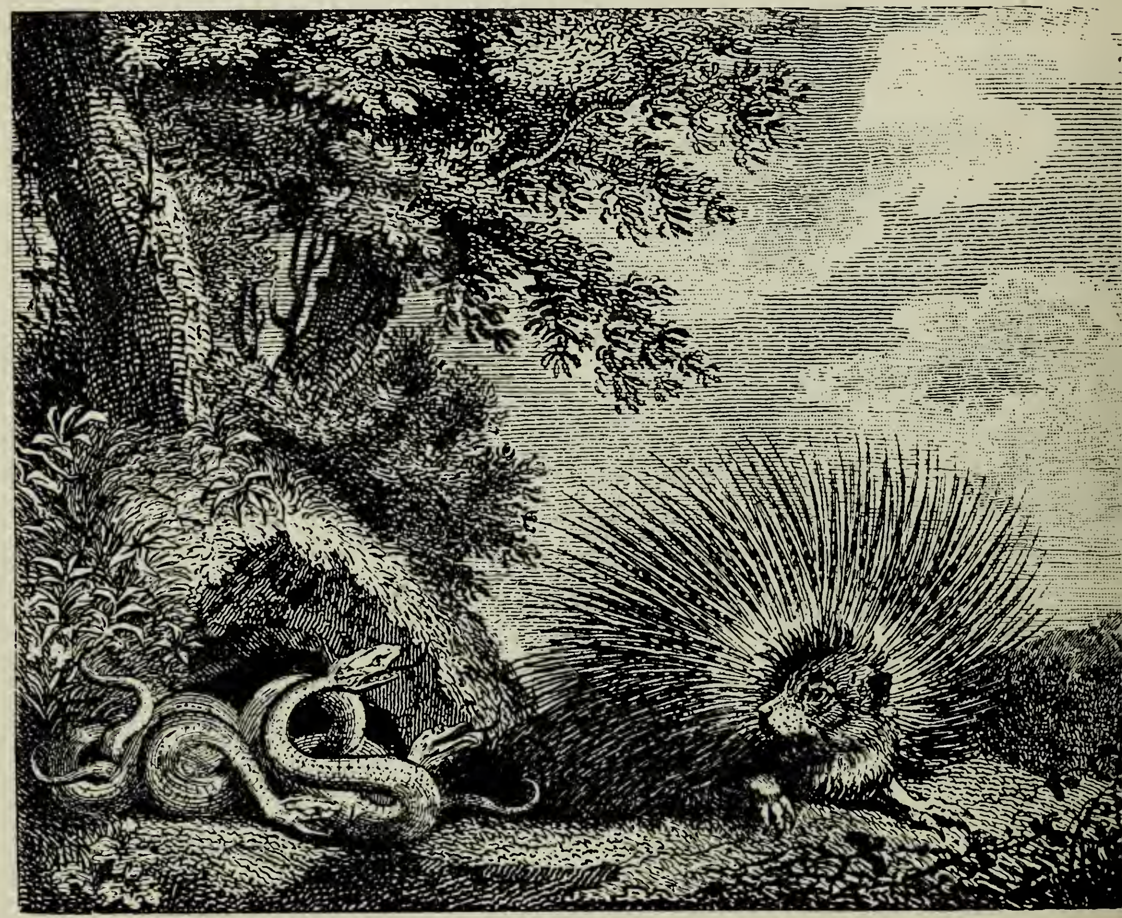
Necessity is the mother of invention.

Many things which cannot be effected by strength, or by the vulgar way of enterprising, may yet be brought about by some new and untried means. A man of sagacity and penetration, upon encountering a difficulty or two, does not immediately despair; but, if he cannot succeed one way, employs his wit and ingenuity another; and, to avoid or get over an impediment, makes no scruple of stepping out of the path of his forefathers. Since our happiness, next to the regulation of our minds, depends altogether upon our having and enjoying the conveniences of life, why should we stand upon ceremony about the methods of obtaining them, or pay any deference to antiquity upon that score? If almost every age had not exerted itself in some new improvements of its own, we should want a thousand arts, or, at least, many degrees of perfection in every art which at present we are in possession of. The invention of anything which is more commodious for the mind or body than what they had before, ought to be embraced readily, and the projector of it distinguished with a suitable encouragement. Such as the use of the compass, for example, from which mankind reaps so much benefit and advantage, and which was not known to former ages. When we follow the steps of those who have gone before us in the old beaten track of life, how do we differ from horses in a team, which are linked to each other by a chain or harness, and move on in a dull heavy pace, to the tune of their leader's bells? But the man who enriches the present fund of knowledge with some new and useful improvement, like a happy adventurer at sea, discovers, as it were, an unknown land, and imports an additional trade into his own country.

FABLE XL.

The Porcupine and the Snakes.

A Porcupine, wanting to shelter himself, desired a nest of Snakes to give him admittance into their cave. They were prevailed upon, and let him in accordingly; but were so annoyed with his sharp, prickly quills that they soon repented of their easy compliance, and entreated the Porcupine to withdraw, and leave them their hole to themselves. "No," says he; "let them quit the place that don't like it; for my part, I am well enough satisfied as I am."



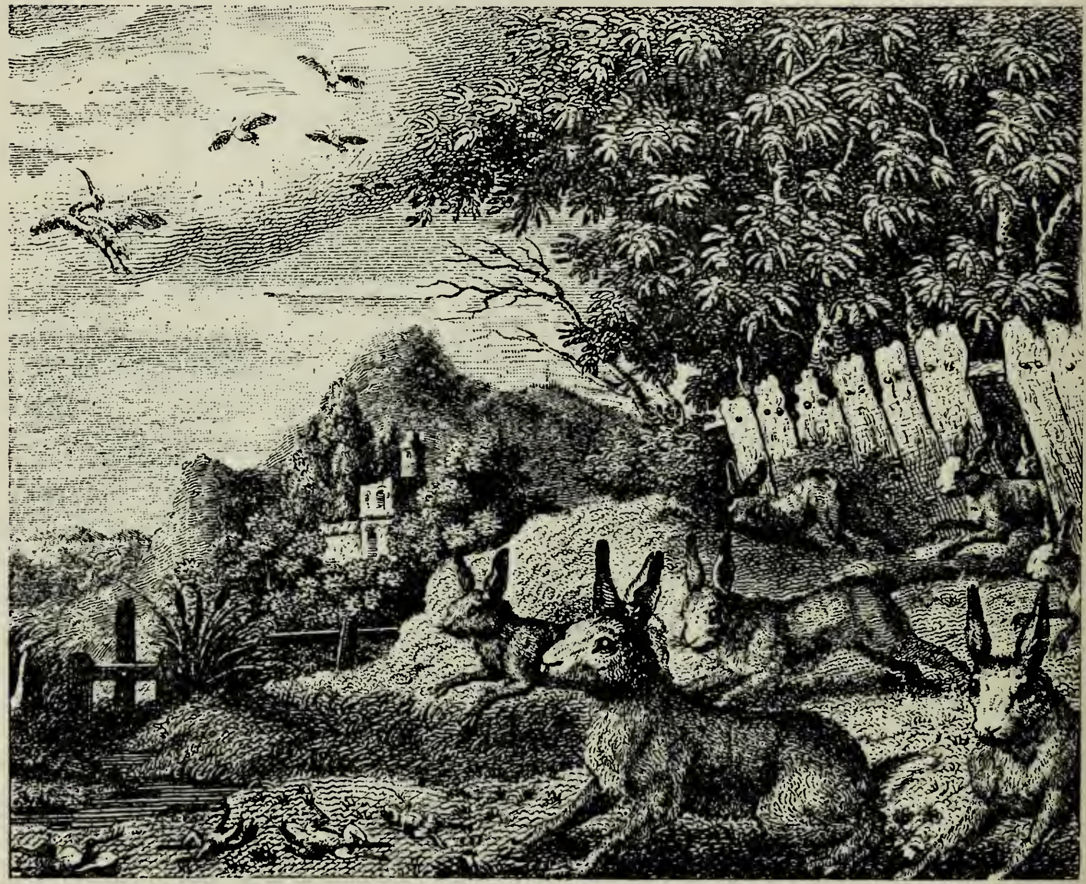
Possession is nine points of the law.

Some people are of so brutish, inhospitable tempers, that there is no living with them, without greatly incommoding ourselves. Therefore, before we enter into any degree of friendship, alliance, or partnership, with any person whatever, we should thoroughly consider his nature and qualities, his circumstances and his humour. There ought to be something in each of these respects to tally and correspond with our own measures, to suit our genius, and adapt itself to the size and proportion of our desires; otherwise our associations, of whatever kind, may prove the greatest plagues of our life. Young men are very apt to run into this error; and being warm in all their passions, throw open their arms at once, and admit into the greatest intimacy persons whom they know little of, but by false and uncertain lights. Thus they sometimes receive a viper into their bosom instead of a friend, and take a Porcupine for a consort, with whom they are obliged to cohabit, though she may prove a thorn in their sides as long as they live. A true friend is one of the greatest blessings in life; therefore to be mistaken or disappointed of such enjoyment, when we hope to be in full possession of it, must be as great a mortification. So that we cannot be too nice and scrupulous in our choice of those who are to be our companions for life: for they must have but a poor, shallow notion of friendship who intend to take it, like a lease, for a term of years only. In a word, the doctrine which this fable speaks, is to prepare us against being injured or deceived by a rash combination of any sort. The manners of the man we desire for a friend, of the woman we like for a wife, of the person with whom we would jointly manage and concert measures for the advancement of our temporal interest, should be narrowly and cautiously inspected before we embark with them in the same vessel, lest we should alter our mind when it is too late, and think of regaining the shore after we have launched out of our depth.

FABLE XLI.

THE HARES AND FROGS IN A STORM.

UPON a great storm of wind that blew among the trees and bushes, and made a rustling with the leaves, the Hares (in a certain park where there happened to be a plenty of them) were so terribly frighted that they ran like mad all over



the place, resolving to seek out some retreat of more security, or to end their unhappy days by doing violence to themselves. With this resolution they found an outlet where a pale had been broken down, and, bolting forth upon an adjoining common, had not run far before their course was stopt by that of a gentle brook which glided across the way they intended to take. This was so grievous a disappointment that they were not able to bear it; and they determined rather to throw themselves headlong into the water, let what would become of it, than lead a life so full of dangers and crosses. But, upon their coming to the brink of the river, a parcel of Frogs, which were sitting there, frighted at their approach, leapt into the stream in great confusion, and dived to the very bottom for fear: which a cunning old puss observing, called to the rest and said, "Hold, have a care what ye do : here are other creatures, I perceive, which have their fears as well as us : don't, then, let us fancy ourselves the most miserable of any upon earth; but rather, by their example, learn to bear patiently those inconveniences which our nature has thrown upon us."

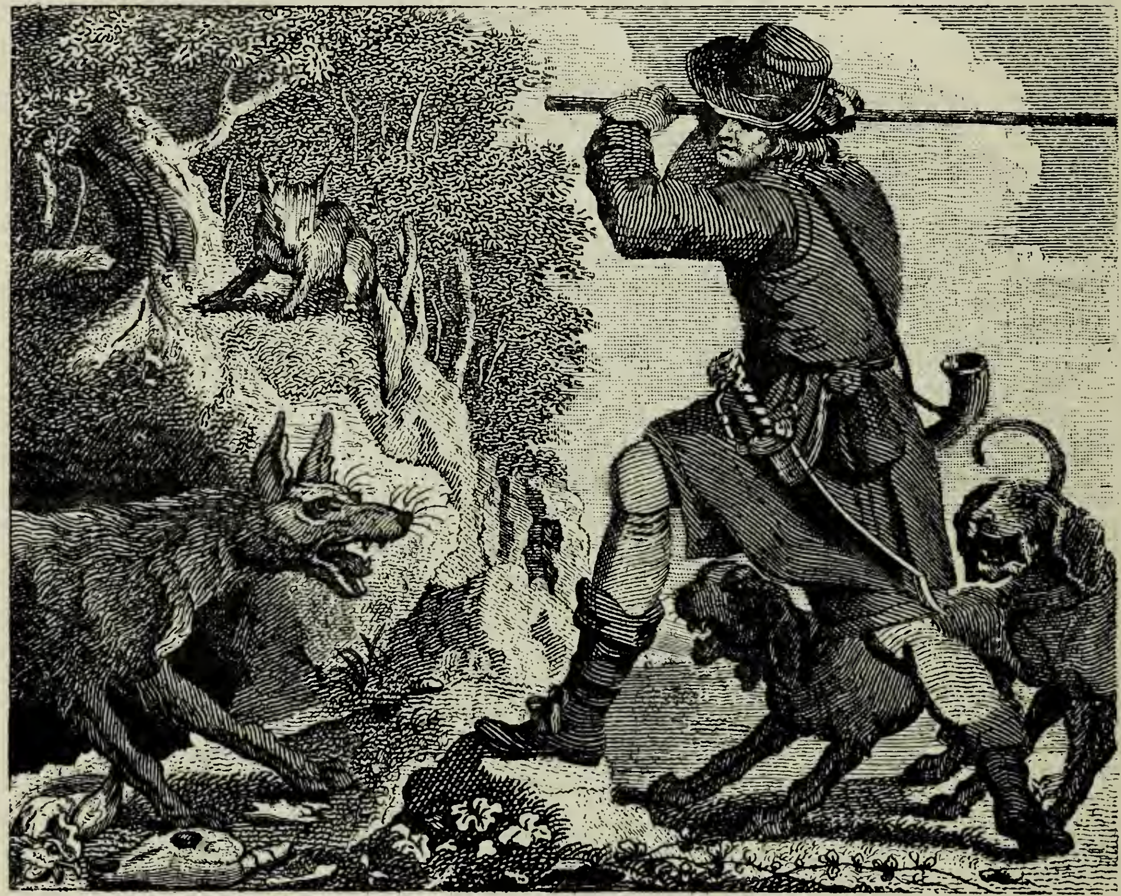
Cowards die many times before their deaths.

This fable is designed to shew us how unreasonable many people are for living in such continual fears and disquiets about the miserableness of their condition. There is hardly any state of life great enough to satisfy the wishes of an ambitious man; and scarce any so mean but may supply all the necessities of him that is moderate. But if people will be so unwise as to work themselves up to imaginary misfortunes, why do they grumble at nature and their stars, when their own perverse minds are only to blame? If we are to conclude ourselves unhappy by as many degrees as there are others greater than we, why, then, the greatest part of mankind must be miserable, in some degree at least. But if they who repine at their own afflicted condition would but reckon up how many more there are with whom they would not change cases, than whose pleasures they envy, they would certainly rise up better satisfied from such a calculation. But what shall we say to those who have a way of creating themselves panics from the rustling of the wind, the scratching of a rat or mouse behind the hangings, the fluttering of a moth, or the motion of their own shadow by moonlight? Their whole life is as full of alarms as that of a Hare; and they never think themselves so happy as when, like the timorous folks in the fable, they meet with a set of creatures as fearful as themselves.

FABLE XLII.

THE FOX AND THE WOLF.

THE Wolf having laid in store of provision, kept close at home, and made much of himself. The Fox observed this, and thinking it something particular, went to visit him, the better to inform himself of the truth of the matter. The Wolf excused himself from seeing him, by pretending he was very much indisposed. All this did but confirm the Fox in his suspicions: so away he goes to a shepherd, and made discovery of the Wolf; telling him, he had nothing else to do but to come with a good weapon and knock him on the head



as he lay in his cave. The shepherd followed his directions and killed the Wolf. The wicked Fox enjoyed the cave and provisions to himself, but enjoyed them not long; for the same shepherd passing afterwards by the same hole, and seeing the Fox there, dispatched him also.

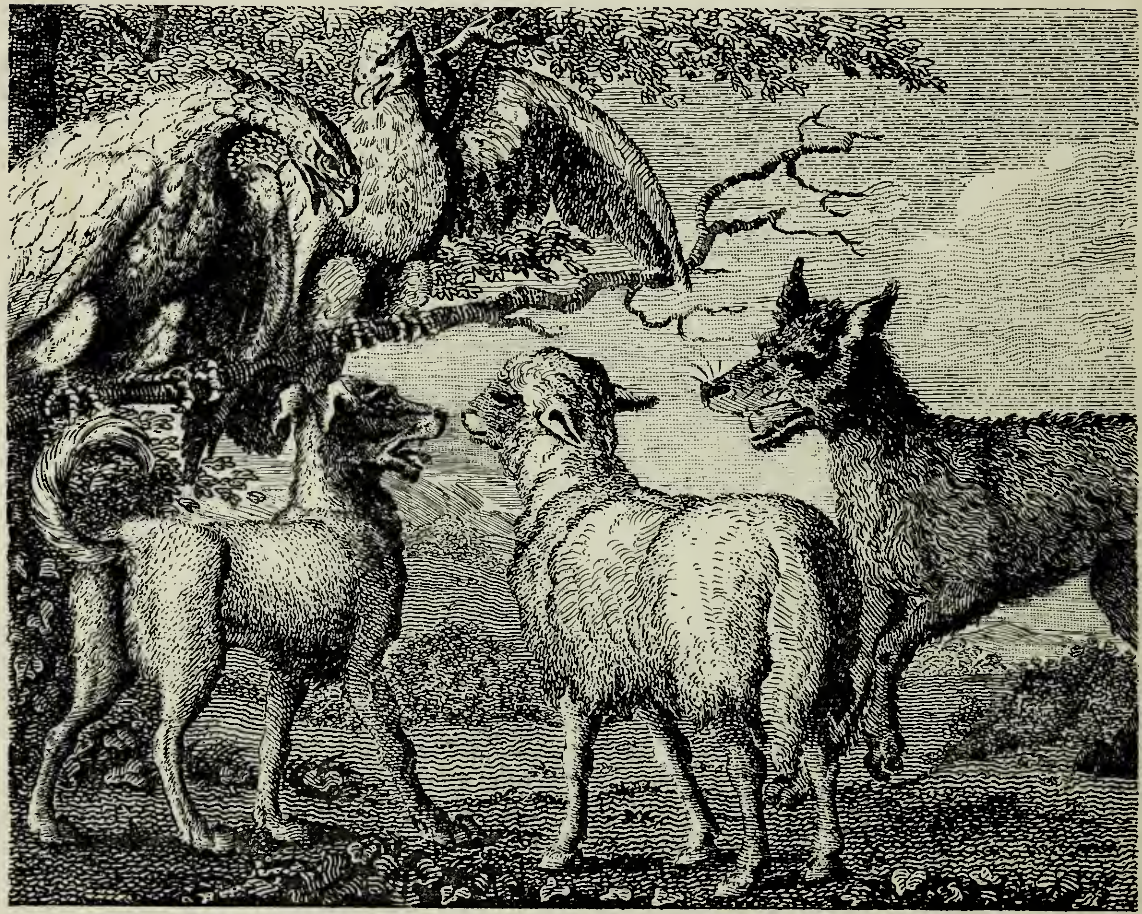
Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein.

"'Tis impossible for an envious man to be happy. He makes the world his enemies, and the mischief that he does to others returns in a judgment upon his own head. There's no trusting of a crafty, designing knave. I do not speak of the trust of privacy and confidence only; but a wise man would not so much as venture himself in such company, nor let him come within distance of so much as knowing how to put a trick upon him. This Fable shews us the danger of such conversation. And it shews us likewise the just fate that attends the treachery even of one traitor to another. The Wolf had a design upon the Fox; the Fox had a counter-design upon the Wolf (which was no more than a couple of crafty knaves well matched); and the Shepherd did justice upon them both."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE XLIII.

The Dog and the Sheep.

The Dog sued the Sheep for a debt, of which the kite and the wolf were to be judges. They, without debating long upon the matter, or making any scruple for want of evidence, gave sentence for the plaintiff; who immediately tore the poor Sheep in pieces, and divided the spoil with the unjust judges.



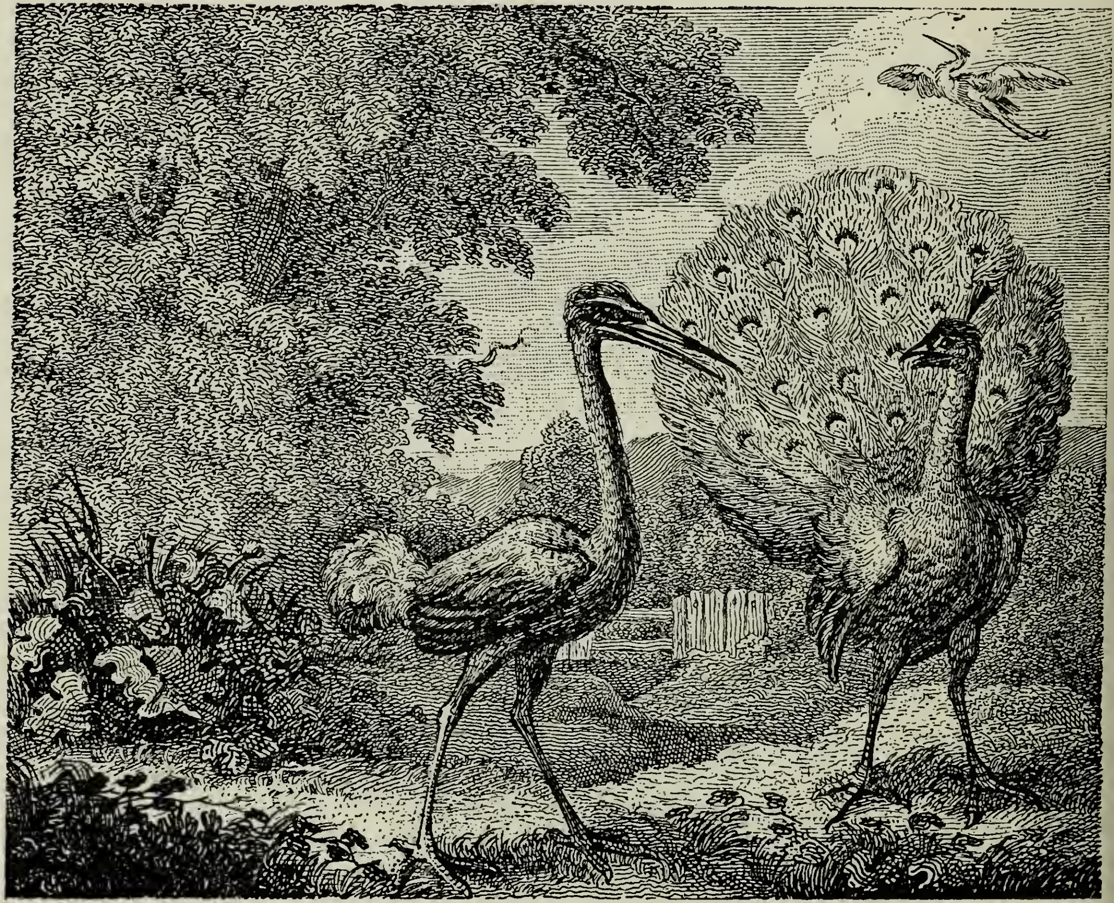
One foul sentence doth more hurt than many foul examples ; for these do but corrupt the stream, the other corrupteth the fountain.

"Equity is a roguish thing: for law we have a measure, know what to trust to; equity is according to the conscience of him that is Chancellor, and as that is larger or narrower, so is equity. 'Tis all one as if they should make the standard for the measure we call a foot a Chancellor's foot; what an uncertain measure would this be? One Chancellor has a long foot, another a short foot, a third an indifferent foot. 'Tis the same in the Chancellor's conscience."—John Selden.

FABLE XLIV.

THE PEACOCK AND THE CRANE.

THE Peacock and the Crane by chance met together in the same place. The Peacock erecting his tail, displayed his gaudy plumes, and looked with contempt upon the Crane, as some mean ordinary person. The Crane, resolving to mortify his insolence, took occasion to say, that Peacocks were very fine birds indeed, if fine feathers could make them so; but that he thought it a much nobler thing to be able to rise above the clouds, than to strut about upon the ground, and be gazed at by children.



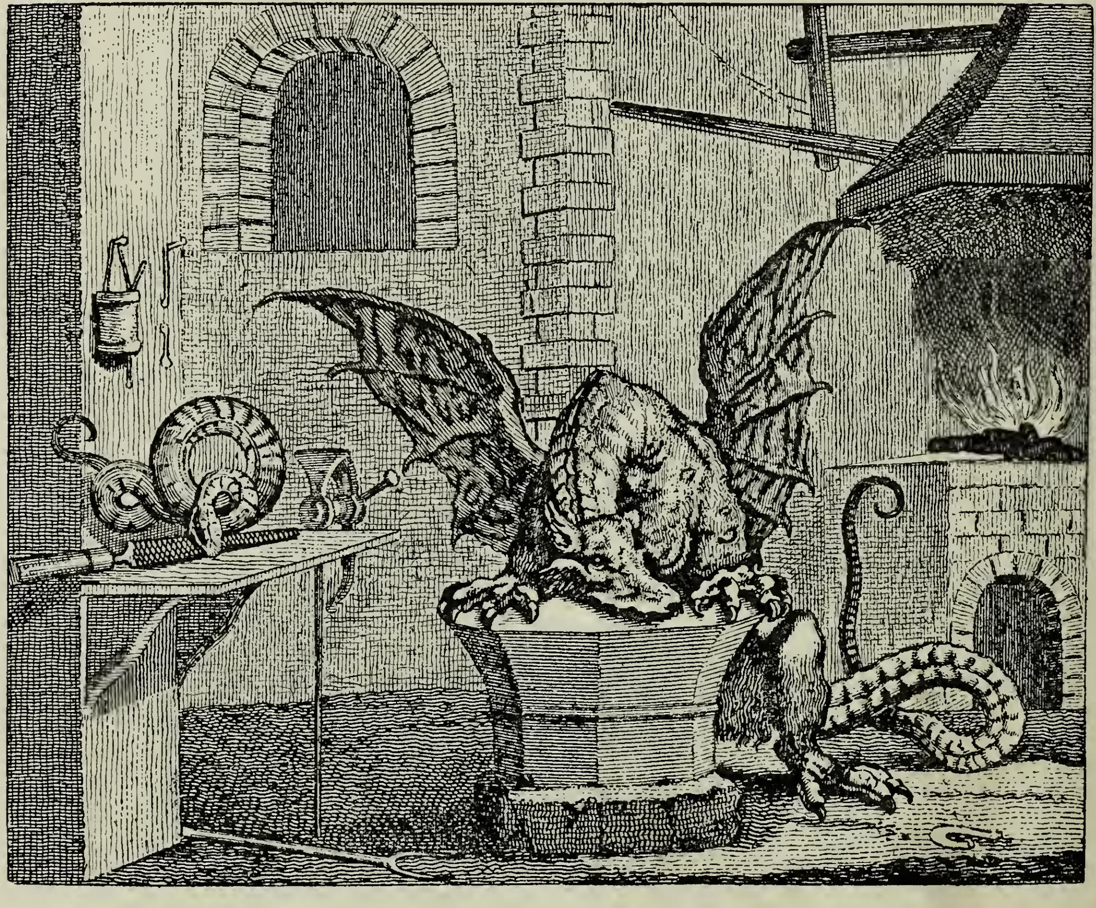
By outward show let's not be cheated,
An ass should like an ass be treated.

"No man is to be despised for any natural infirmity or defect; for every man has something or other in him of good too, and that which one man wants another has. And it is all according to the good pleasure of Providence. Nature is pleased to entertain herself with variety. Some of her works are for ornament, others for the use and service of mankind. But they have all respectively their properties and their virtues, for she does nothing in vain. . The Peacock values himself upon the gracefulness of his train; the Crane's pride is in the rankness of her wing; which are only two excellences in several kinds. Take them apart and they are both equally perfect; but good things themselves have their degrees, and that which is most necessary and useful must be allowed a preference to the other."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE XLV.

THE VIPER AND THE FILE.

A VIPER entering a smith's shop, looked up and down for something to eat; and seeing a File, fell to gnawing it as greedily as could be. The File told him, very gruffly, that he had best be quiet and let him alone: for he would get very little by nibbling at one who, upon occasion, could bite iron and steel.



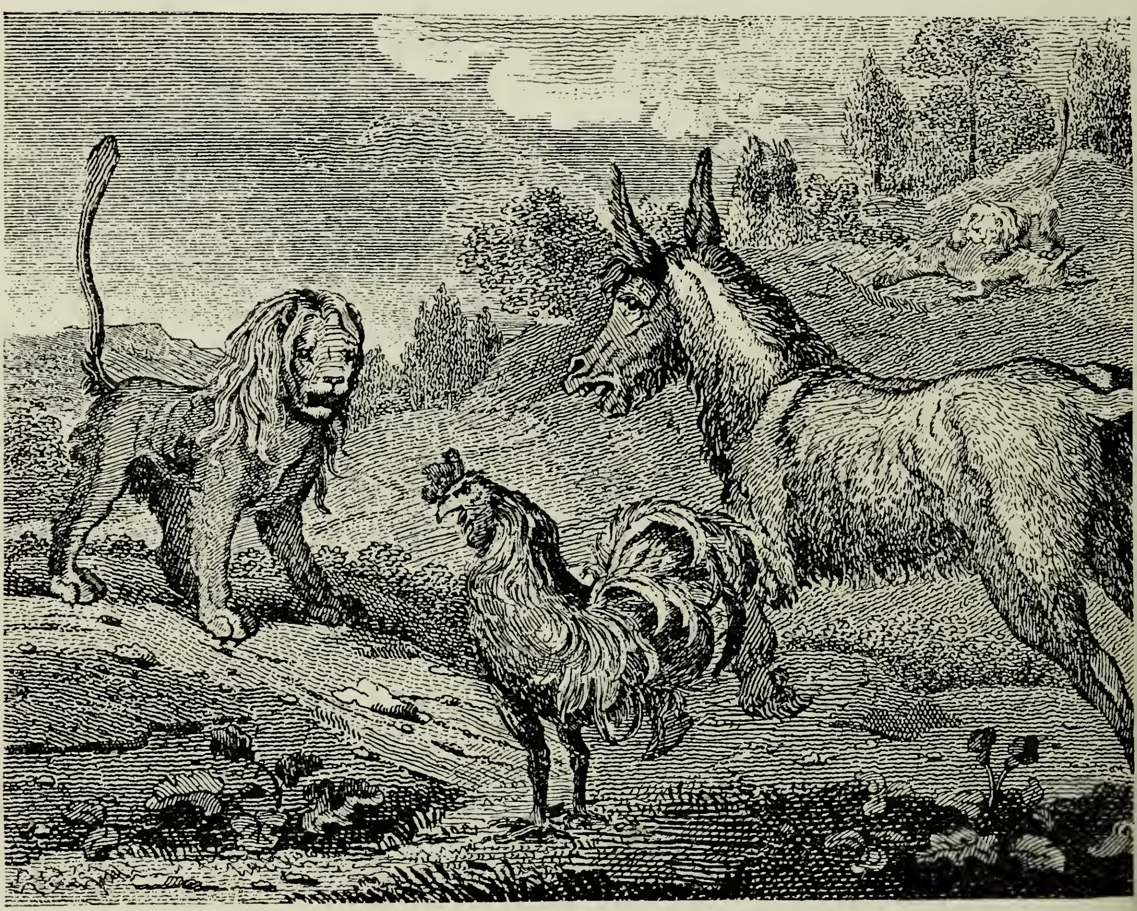
Facts are stubborn things.

Facts are stubborn things. Men in all ages have, like the Viper in the Fable, attempted to bite the File, and only succeeded in making themselves ridiculous. Before the times of Galileo and Harvey the world believed in the stagnation of the blood, and the diurnal immovability of the earth; and for denying these, the one was persecuted and the other ridiculed. Virgilius, Bishop of Saltzburg, having asserted that there existed antipodes, the Archbishop of Mentz declared him a heretic, and consigned him to the flames. Galileo was condemned at Rome publicly to disavow sentiments, the truth of which must have been to him abundantly manifest. "Are these, then, my judges?" he exclaimed, in retiring from the inquisition whose ignorance astonished him. Cornelius Agrippa was compelled to fly his country, and the enjoyment of a large income, for having displayed a few philosophical experiments which now every schoolboy can perform. But in spite of the persecution which the truth-seekers have received, the facts themselves have been too hard for the persecutors. Truth will out; and those who struggle against it, though they may appear successful for a time, will in the longrun have to succumb to a greater power than themselves.

FABLE XLVI.

THE ASS, THE LION, AND THE COCK.

AN Ass and a Cock happened to be feeding together in the same place, when on a sudden they spied a Lion approaching them. This beast is reported, above all things, to have an aversion, or rather antipathy, to the crowing of a Cock; so that he no sooner heard the voice of that bird, but he betook him to his heels, and ran away as fast as ever he could. The Ass fancying he fled for fear of him, in the bravery of his heart pursued him, and followed him so far, that they were quite out of the hearing of the Cock; which the Lion no



sooner perceived, but he turned about and seized the Ass; and just as he was ready to tear him to pieces, the sluggish creature is said to have expressed himself thus:—"Alas! fool that I was, knowing the cowardice of my own nature, thus by an affected courage to throw myself into the jaws of death, when I might have remained secure and unmolested!"

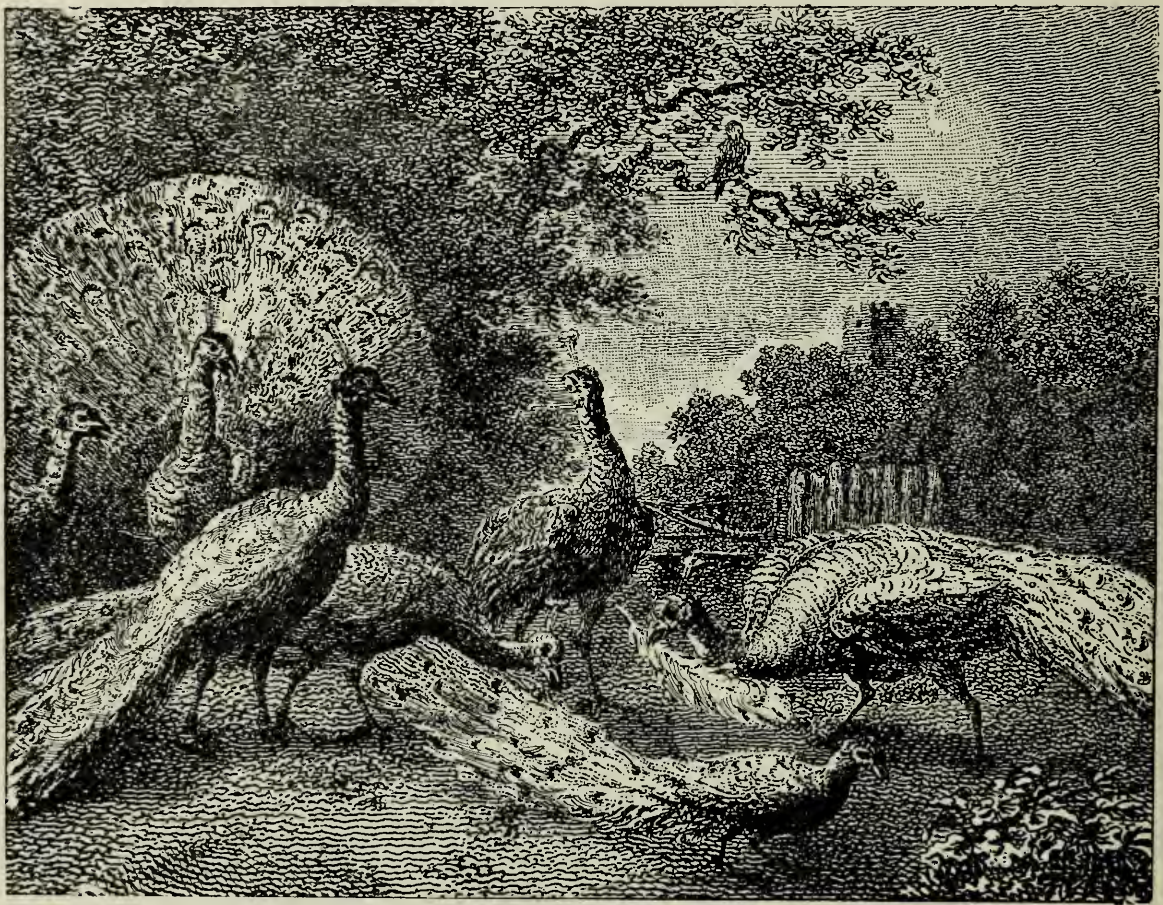
Fools will be meddling.

"It is a great presumption to ascribe our successes to our own management, and not to esteem ourselves upon any blessing, rather as it is the bounty of Heaven, than the acquisition of our own prudence. I am very well pleased with a medal that was struck by Queen Elizabeth, a little after the defeat of the invincible Armada, to perpetuate the memory of that extraordinary event. It is well known how the King of Spain and others, who were the enemies of that great princess, to derogate from her glory, ascribed the ruin of their fleet rather to the violence of storms and tempests than to the bravery of the English. Queen Elizabeth, instead of looking upon this as a diminution of her honour, valued herself upon such a singular favour of Providence, and, accordingly, in the reverse of the medal above mentioned, has represented a fleet beaten by a tempest, and falling foul upon one another, with that religious inscription—*Afflavit Deus, et dissipantur.* 'He blew with his wind, and they were scattered.'"—*The Spectator.*

FABLE XLVII.

THE JACKDAW AND PEACOCKS.

A CERTAIN Jackdaw was so proud and ambitious that, not contented to live within his own sphere, he picked up the feathers which fell from the Peacocks, stuck them in among his own, and very confidently introduced himself into an assembly of those beautiful birds. They soon found him out, stripped him of his borrowed plumes, and, falling upon him with their sharp bills, punished him as his presumption deserved. Upon this, full of grief and affliction, he returned to his old companions, and would have flocked with them again; but they,



knowing his late life and conversation, industriously avoided him, and refused to admit him into their company: and one of them, at the same time, gave him this serious reproof:—"If, friend, you could have been contented with our station, and had not disdained the rank in which Nature had placed you, you had not been used so scurvily by those upon whom you intruded yourself, nor suffered the notorious slight which now we think ourselves obliged to put upon you."

Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.

"I have thus written, because it is amiable and pleasant to God, when Christians keep their rank, relation, and station, doing all as becometh their quality and calling. When Christians stand every one in their places and do the work of their relations, then they are like the flowers in the garden, that stand and grow where the gardener hath planted them, and then they shall both honour the garden in which they are planted, and the gardener that hath so disposed them. From the hyssop in the wall to the cedar in Lebanon, their fruit is their glory. And seeing the stock into which we are planted is the fruitfullest stock, the sap conveyed thereout the fruitfullest sap, and the dresser of our souls the wisest husbandman, how contrary to nature, to example, and expectation should we be if we should not be rich in good works!

"Wherefore take heed of being painted fire, wherein is no warmth; and painted flowers, which retain no smell; and of being painted trees, whereon is no fruit. 'Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.'"—JOHN BUNYAN.

FABLE XLVIII.

THE ANT AND THE FLY.

ONE day there happened some words between the Ant and the Fly about precedency, and the point was argued with great warmth and eagerness on both sides. Says the Fly, "It is well known what my pretensions are, and how justly they are grounded: there is never a sacrifice that is offered but I always taste of the entrails, even before the gods themselves. I have one of the uppermost seats at church, and frequent the altar as often as anybody: I have a free admission at court; and can never want the king's ear, for I sometimes sit

upon his shoulder. There is not a maid of honour, or handsome young creature, comes in my way, but, if I like her, I settle betwixt her balmy lips. And then I eat and drink the best of everything, without having any occasion to work for my living. What is there that such country pusses as you enjoy, to be compared with a life like this?"—The Ant, who by this time had composed herself, replied with a great deal of temper, and no less severity,—"Indeed, to be a guest at an entertainment of the gods is a very great honour, if one is invited; but I should not care to be a disagreeable intruder anywhere. You talk of the king and the court, and the fine ladies there, with great familiarity; but, as I have been getting in my harvest in summer, I have seen a certain person under the town walls making a hearty meal upon something that is not so proper to be mentioned. As to your frequenting the altars, you are in the right to take sanctuary where you are like to meet with the least disturbance; but I have known people before now run to altars, and call it devotion, when they have been shut out of all good company, and had nowhere else to go. You do not work for your living, you say—true: therefore, when you have played away the summer, and winter comes, you have nothing to live upon; and, while you are starving with cold and hunger, I have a good warm house over my head, and plenty of provisions about me."

Self-praise is no recommendation.

"Lady Blarney was particularly attached to Olivia; Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs (I love to give the whole name) took a greater fancy to her sister. They supported the conversation between themselves, while my daughter sat silent, admiring their exalted breeding. But as every reader, however beggarly himself, is fond of high-lived dialogues, with anecdotes of Lords, Ladies, and Knights of the Garter, I must beg leave to give him the concluding part of the present conversation.

"'All that I know of the matter,' cried Miss Skeggs, 'is this, that it may be true or may not be true; but this I can assure your Ladyship, that the whole rout was in amaze: his Lordship turned all manner of colour, my Lady fell into a swound, but Sir Tomkyn drawing his sword, swore he was hers to the last drop of his blood.'

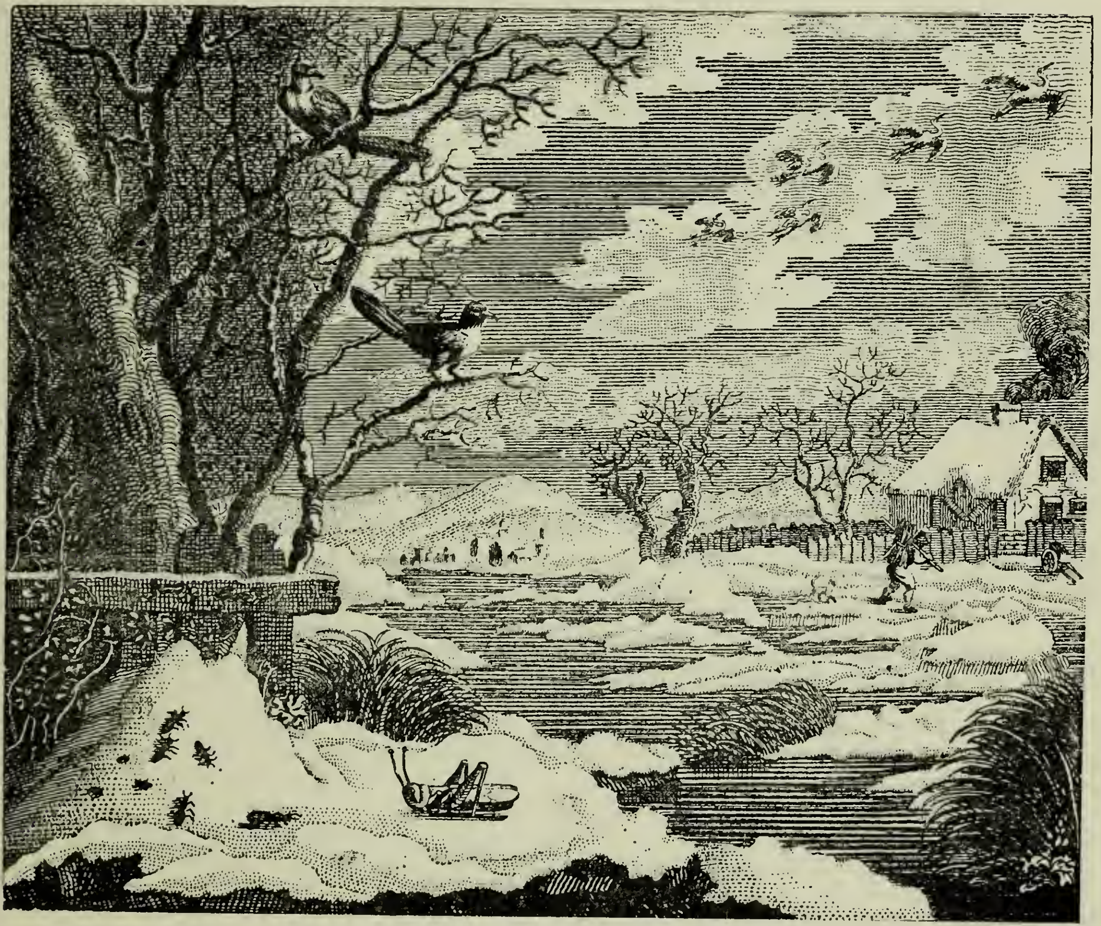
"'Well,' replied our Peeress, 'this I can say, that the Duchess never told me a syllable of the matter, and I believe her Grace would keep nothing a secret from me. This you may depend on as a fact, that the next morning my Lord Duke cried out three times to his valet-de-chambre, Jernigan! Jernigan! Jernigan! bring me my garters.'

"But previously I should have mentioned the very impolite behaviour of Mr Burchell, who, during this discourse, sat with his face turned to the fire, and, at the conclusion of every sentence, would cry out *fudge*, an expression which displeased us all, and, in some measure, damped the rising spirit of the conversation."—OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

FABLE XLIX.

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

In the winter season, a commonwealth of Ants was busily employed in the management and preservation of their corn; which they exposed to the air in heaps round about the avenues of their little country habitation. A Grasshopper, who had chanced to outlive the summer, and was ready to starve with cold and hunger, approached them with great humility, and begged that they would relieve his necessity with one grain of wheat or rye. One of the Ants asked him how he had disposed of his time in summer that he had not taken



pains, and laid in a stock, as they had done?—"Alas, gentlemen," says he, "I passed away the time merrily and pleasantly, in drinking, singing, and dancing, and never once thought of winter."—"If that be the case," replied the Ant, laughing, "all I have to say is, that they who drink, sing, and dance in the summer must starve in winter."

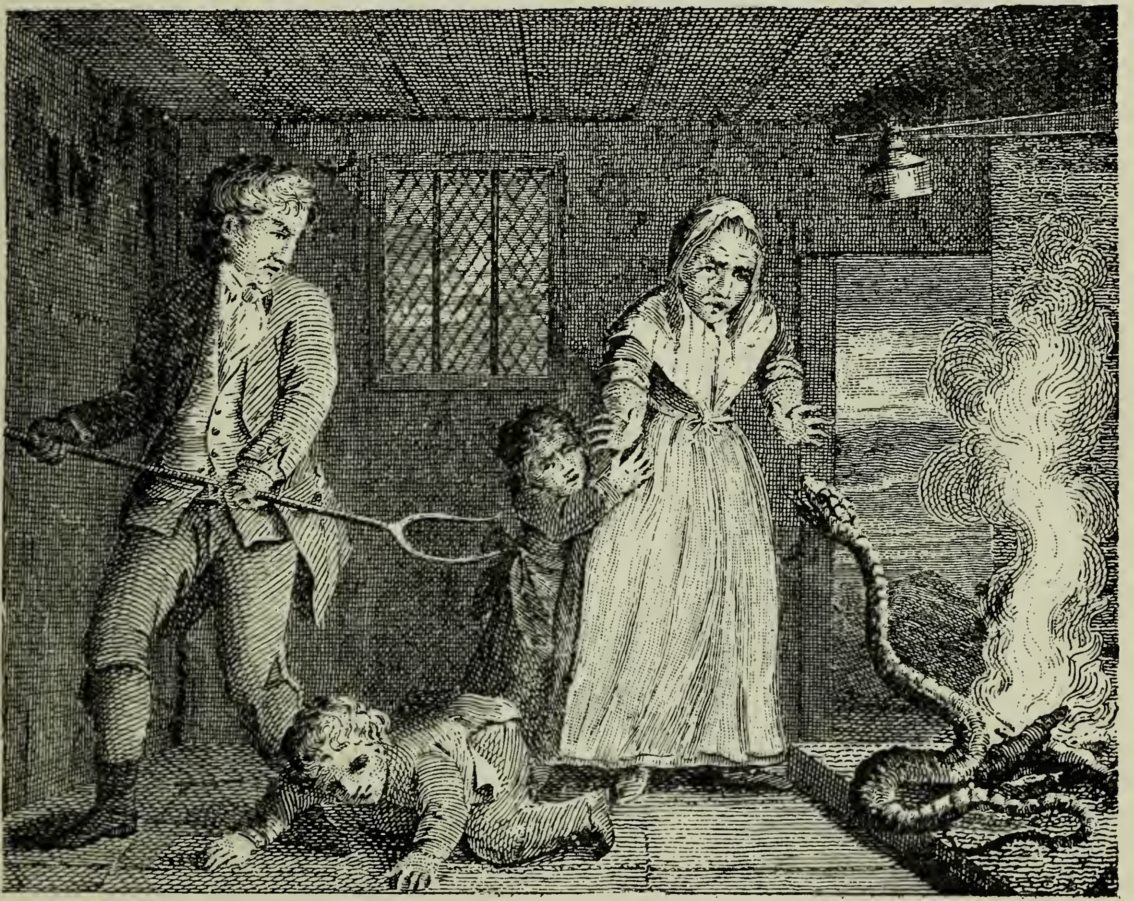
Go to the Ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Now, while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you; go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterward come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."—*St Matthew* xxv.

FABLE L.

THE COUNTRYMAN AND THE SNAKE.

A VILLAGER, in a frosty, snowy winter, found a snake under a hedge, almost dead with cold. He could not help having a compassion for the poor creature, so brought it home, and laid it upon the hearth near the fire; but it had not lain there long before (being revived with the heat) it began to erect itself, and fly at his wife and children, filling the whole cottage with dreadful hissings. The Countryman hearing an outcry, and perceiving what the matter was, catched up a mattock, and soon dispatched him; upbraiding him at the same time in



these words:—"Is this, vile wretch, the reward you make to him that saved your life? Die as you deserve; but a single death is too good for you."

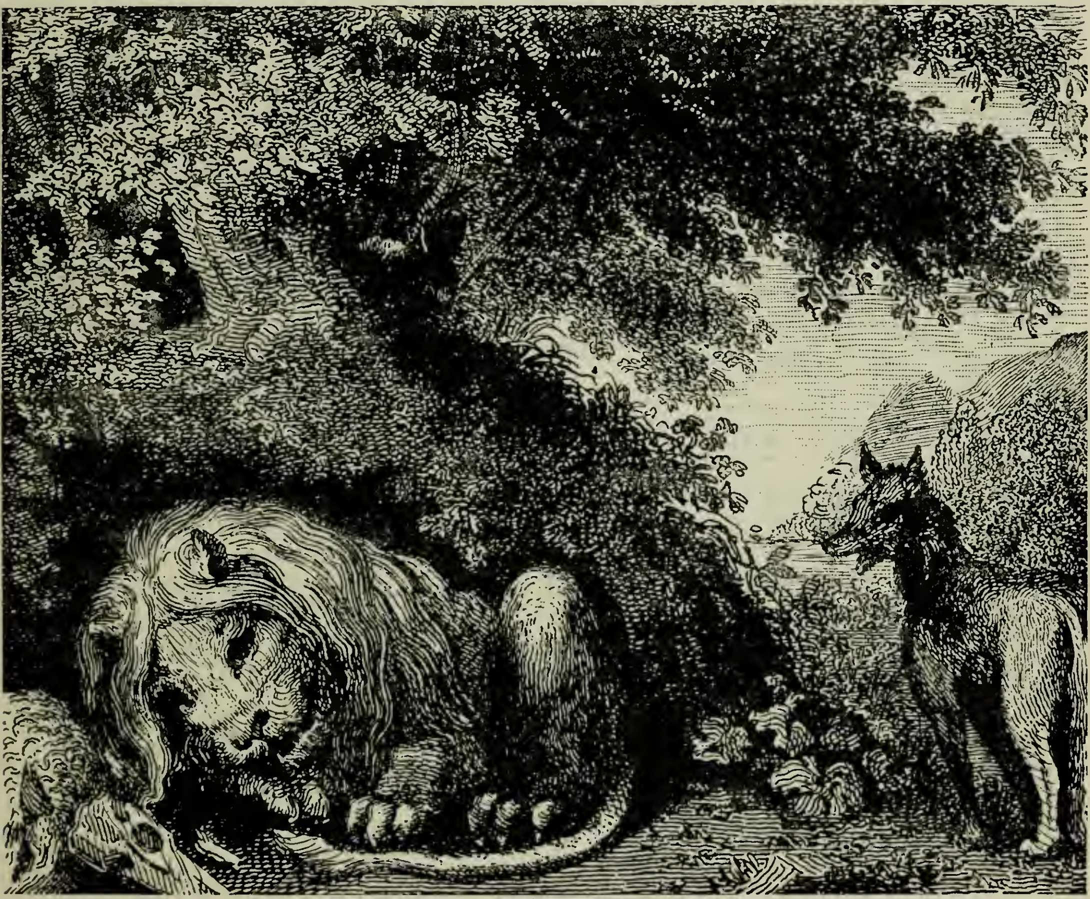
There is a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

"He that takes an ungrateful man into his bosom, is well-nigh sure to be betrayed; and it is no longer charity, but folly, to think of obliging the common enemies of mankind. But 'tis no new thing for good-natured men to meet with ungrateful returns. Wherefore friendships, charities, and kindnesses should be well weighed and examined, as to the circumstances of time, place, manner, person, and proportion, before we sign and seal. A man had much better take a *tiger* into his grounds, than a *snake* into his bosom. How many examples have we seen with our own eyes of men that have been picked up, and relieved out of starving necessities, without either spirit or strength to do mischief, who in requital have afterwards conspired against the life, honour, and fortune of their patrons and redeemers? Did ever any of these human *snakes* lose their venom for lying under some temporary incapacity of using it? Will they be ever the less dangerous and malicious, when warmth shall bring them to themselves again, because they were once frozen and benumbed with cold? The very credulity encourages an abuse: where the will to do mischief only waits for the power and opportunity of putting it in execution, facility makes the innocent a prey to the crafty. The *snake*, after his recovery, is the very same *snake* still that he was at first. How many people have we read of in story, that after a pardon for one rebellion, have been taken in another with that very pardon in their pockets, and the ink scarce dry upon the parchment? Now, all this is no more than the *proverb* in a *fable*: *Save a thief from the gallows, and he'll cut your throat.*"—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE LI.

THE FOX AND THE SICK LION.

IT was reported that the Lion was sick, and the beasts were made to believe that they could not make their court better than by going to visit him. Upon this they generally went; but it was particularly taken notice of that the Fox was not one of the number. The Lion therefore dispatched one of his jackals to sound him about it, and ask him why he had so little charity and respect as never to come near him at a time when he lay so dangerously ill, and everybody else had been to see him.—"Why," replies the Fox, "pray present my duty



to his majesty, and tell him that I have the same respect for him as ever, and have been coming several times to kiss his royal hand; but I am so terribly frightened at the mouth of his cave, to see the print of my fellow-subjects' feet all pointing forwards and none backwards, that I have not resolution enough to venture in." Now the truth of the matter was, that this sickness of the Lion's was only a sham to draw the beasts into his den, the more easily to devour them.

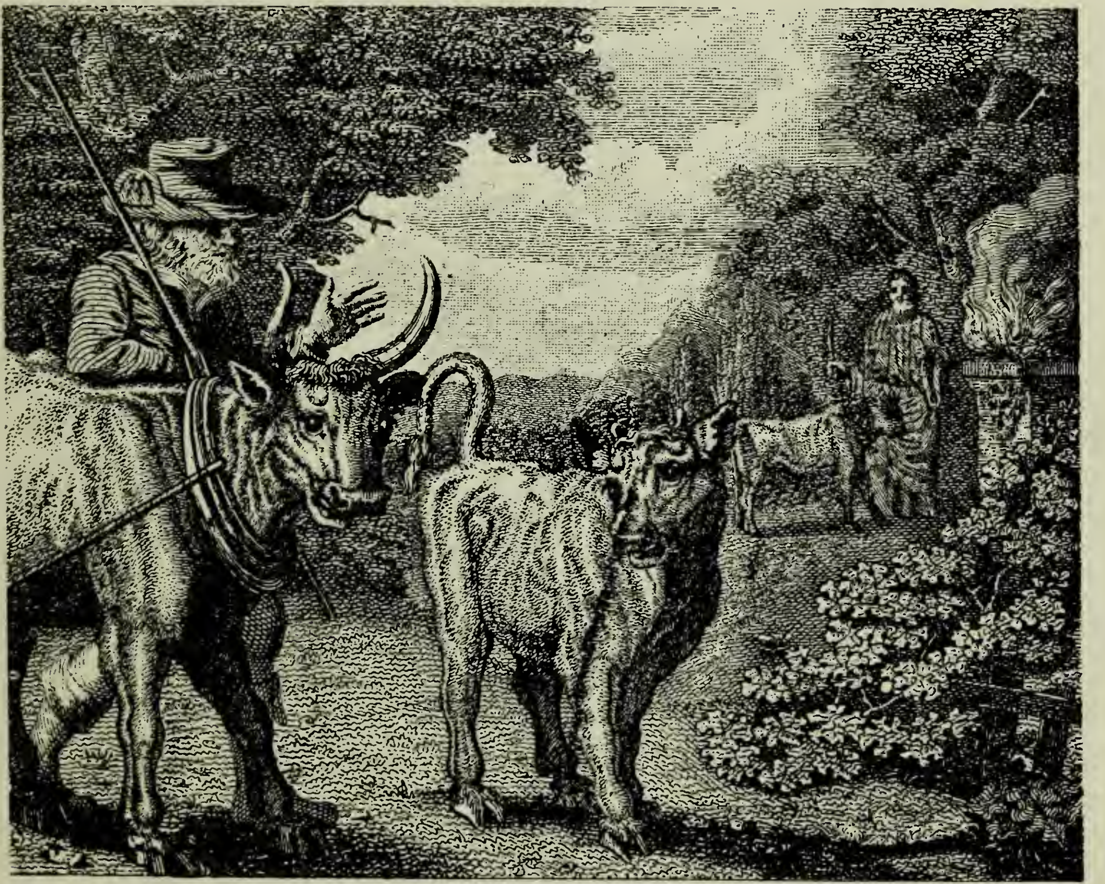
He that cannot see well, let him go softly.

"When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks:
When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand!
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?
Untimely storms make men expect a dearth:
All may be well; but, if God sort it so,
'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect."
SHAKESPEARE: *King Richard III.*

FABLE LII.

THE WANTON CALF.

A CALF, full of play and wantonness, seeing the Ox at plough, could not forbear insulting him. "What a sorry poor drudge art thou," says he, "to bear that heavy yoke upon your neck, and go all day drawing a plough at your tail, to turn up the ground for your master! but you are a wretched dull slave, and know no better, or else you would not do it. See what a happy life I lead: I go just where I please; sometimes I lie down under the cool shade; sometimes frisk about in the open sunshine; and, when I please, slake my thirst in the clear



sweet brook; but you, if you were to perish, have not so much as a little dirty water to refresh you." The Ox, not at all moved with what he said, went quietly and calmly on with his work; and, in the evening, was unyoked and turned loose. Soon after which he saw the Calf taken out of the field, and delivered into the hands of a priest, who immediately led him to the altar, and prepared to sacrifice him. His head was hung round with fillets of flowers, and the fatal knife was just going to be applied to his throat, when the Ox drew near and whispered him to this purpose:—"Behold the end of your insolence and arrogance; it was for this only you were suffered to live at all; and pray now, friend, whose condition is best, yours or mine?"

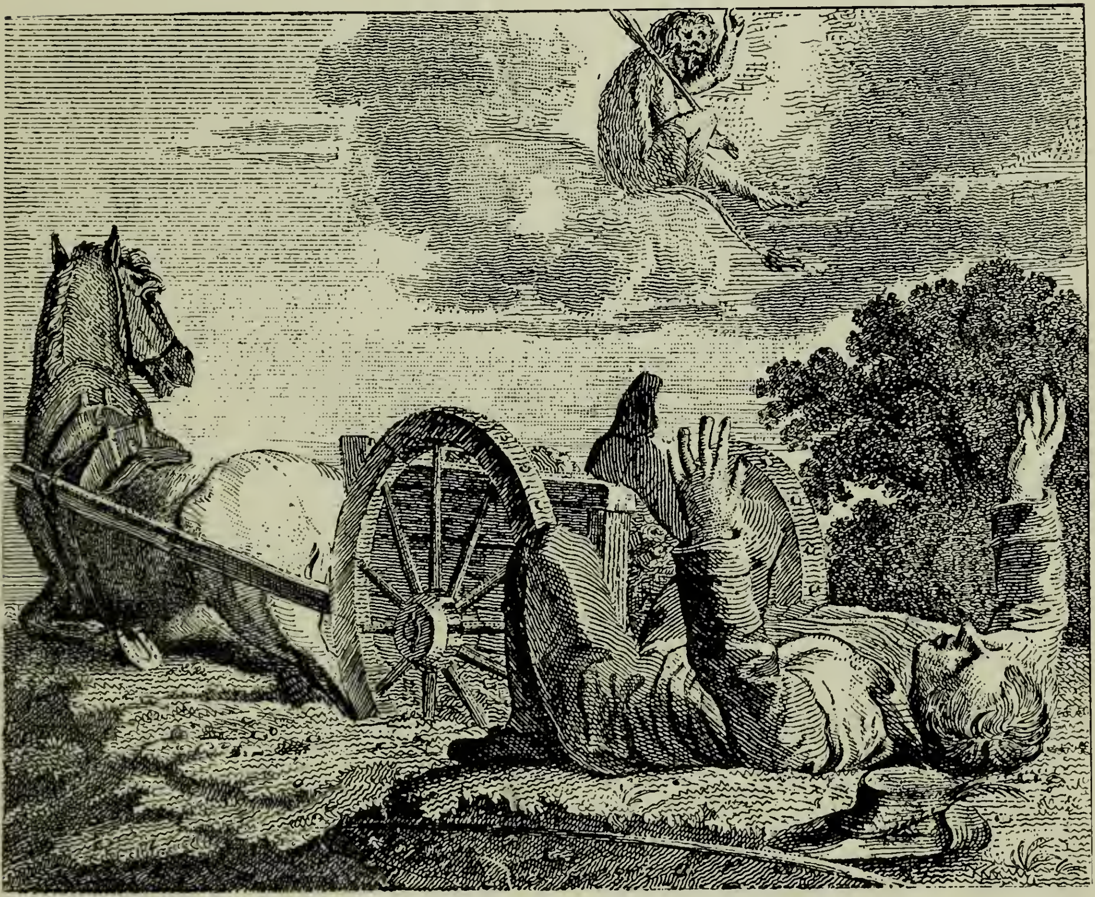
Answer a fool according to his folly.

"There was never anything gotten by sensuality and sloth, either in matter of profit or of reputation; whereas an active, industrious life carries not only credit and advantage, but a good conscience also along with it. The lazy, the voluptuous, the proud, and the delicate are struck at in this fable. Men that set their hearts only upon the present, without either entering into the reason, or looking forward into the end of things: little dreaming that all this pomp of vanity, plenty, and pleasure is but a fattening of them for the slaughter. 'Tis the case of great and rich men in the world; the very advantages they glory in, are the cause of their ruin. The heifer that valued itself upon a smooth coat and a plump habit of body was taken up for a sacrifice, but the ox that was despised for his drudgery and his raw bones went on with his work, still in the way of a safe and honest labour."—Sir Roger L'Estrange.

FABLE LIII.

HERCULES AND THE CARTER.

As a clownish Fellow was driving his cart along a deep miry lane, the wheels stuck so fast in the clay that the horses could not draw them out. Upon this, he fell a-bawling and praying to Hercules to come and help him. Hercules, looking down from a cloud, bid him not lie there, like an idle rascal as he was, but get up and whip his horses stoutly, and clap his shoulder to the wheel; adding, that this was the only way for him to obtain his assistance.



God helps them that help themselves.

"My lord, wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail.
To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength,
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe,
And so your follies fight against yourself.
Fear, and be slain; no worse can come to fight;
And fight and die is death destroying death;
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath."

SHAKESPEARE: *King Richard II.*

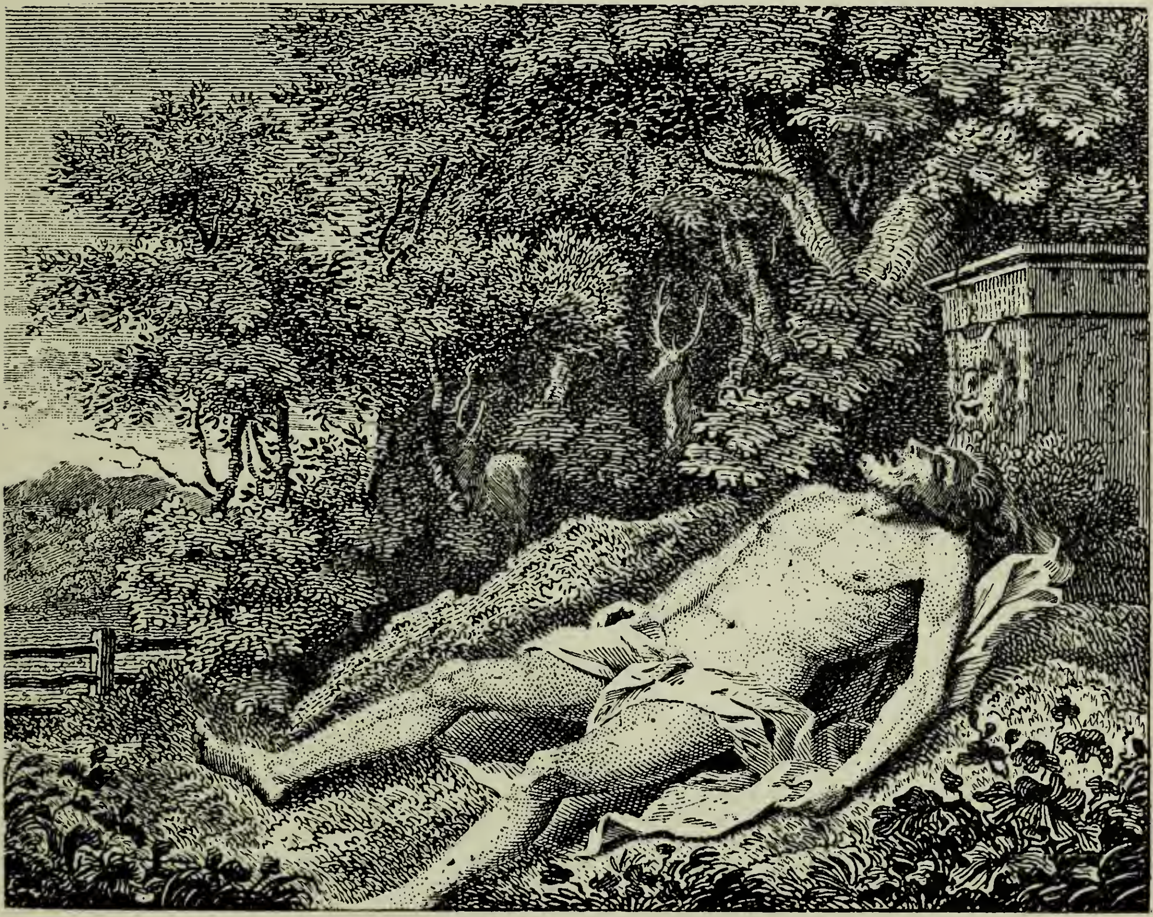
"Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky
Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull."

SHAKESPEARE: *All's Well That Ends Well.*

FABLE LIV.

THE BELLY AND THE MEMBERS.

IN former days, when the Belly and the other parts of the body enjoyed the faculty of speech, and had separate views and designs of their own, each part, it seems, in particular for himself, and in the name of the whole, took exception at the conduct of the Belly, and were resolved to grant him supplies no longer. They said they thought it very hard that he should lead an idle, good-for-nothing life, spending and squandering away, for his own selfish enjoyment, all the fruits of their labour; and that, in short, they were resolved, for the



future, to strike off his allowance, and let him shift for himself as well as he could. The Hands protested they would not lift up a finger to keep him from starving; and the Mouth wished he might never speak again if he took in the least bit of nourishment for him as long as he lived; and, say the Teeth, may we be rotten if ever we chew a morsel for him for the future. This solemn league and covenant was kept as long as anything of that kind can be kept, which was until each of the rebel members pined away to the skin and bone, and could hold out no longer. Then they found there was no doing without the Belly, and that, as idle and insignificant as he seemed, he contributed as much to the maintenance and welfare of all the other parts as they did to his.

United we stand; divided we fall.

"This fable is famous on account of its having been successfully used as an argument addressed to the poor people of Rome, when, oppressed by the taxes and the severity of the laws against debtors, they rose in revolt against the Senate.

"The Senate assembled several times within the space of a few days, and debated the question of relaxing the rigour of the laws; but, as they came to no conclusion, on a sudden the commonalty rose one and all, and encouraging each other, they left the city, and withdrew to the hill now called Sacred, near the river Anio, but without committing any violence or other act of sedition. Only, as they went along, they loudly complained 'That it was now a great while since the rich had driven them from their habitations; that Italy would anywhere supply them with air and water and a place of burial; and that Rome, if they stayed in it, would afford them no other privilege, unless it were such, to bleed and die in fighting for their wealthy oppressors.'

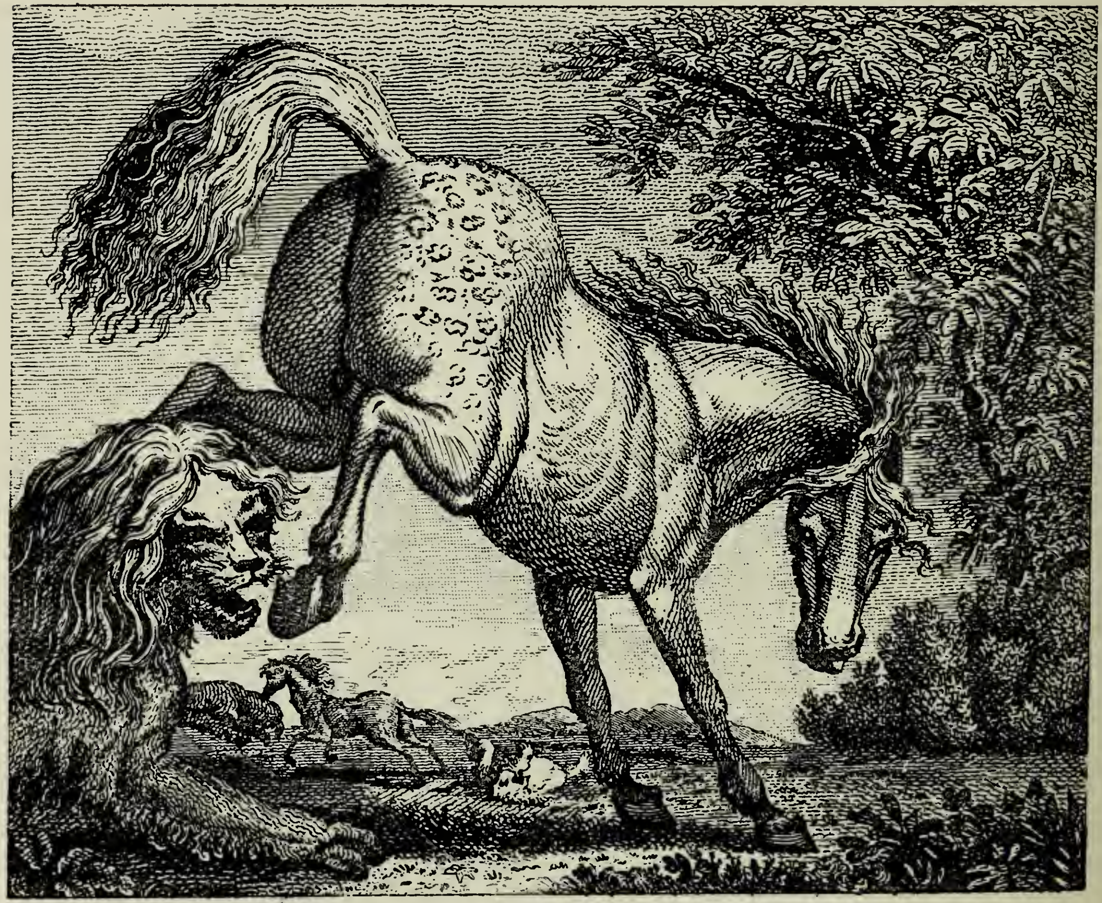
"The Senate were then alarmed, and from the oldest men of their body selected the most moderate and popular to treat with the people. At the head of them was Menenius Agrippa, who, after much entreaty addressed to them, and using many arguments in defence of the Senate, concluded his discourse with this celebrated fable. 'Just so, my fellow-citizens,' said he, 'stands the case between the Senate and you. For their necessary counsels and acts of Government are productive of advantage to you all, and distribute their salutary influence amongst the whole people.'

"After this they were reconciled to the Senate, having demanded and obtained the privilege of appointing five men to defend their rights on all occasions."—*Plutarch's Lives.*

FABLE LV.

THE HORSE AND THE LION.

A LION seeing a fine plump Nag, had a great mind to eat a bit of him, but knew not which way to get him into his power. At last he bethought himself of this contrivance: he gave out that he was a physician, who, having gained experience by his travels into foreign countries, had made himself capable of curing any sort of malady or distemper incident to any kind of beast, hoping by this stratagem to get an easier admittance among cattle, and find an opportunity to execute his design. The horse, who smoked the matter, was resolved to be even



with him; and, so humouring the thing as if he suspected nothing, he prayed the Lion to give him his advice in relation to a thorn he had got in his foot, which had quite lamed him, and gave him great pain and uneasiness. The Lion readily agreed, and desired he might see the foot. Upon which the Horse lifted up one of his hind legs, and, while the Lion pretended to be poring earnestly upon his hoof, gave him such a kick in the face as quite stunned him, and left him sprawling upon the ground. In the meantime the Horse trotted away, neighing and laughing merrily at the success of the trick, by which he had defeated the purpose of one who intended to have tricked him out of his life.

Harm watch, harm catch.

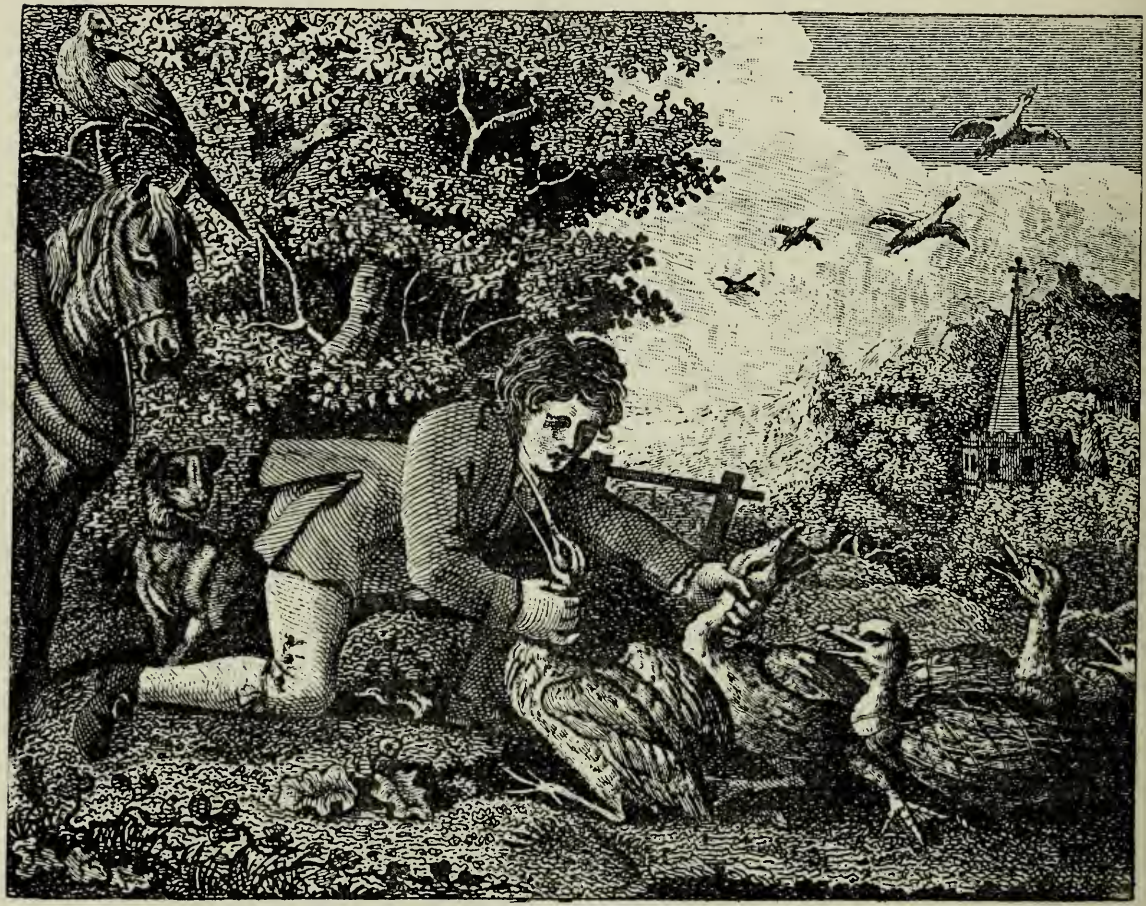
"To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eyes,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it."
SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth.*

"Let it work;
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar; and 't shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet."
SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet.*

FABLE LVI.

THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE STORK.

THE Husbandman pitched a net in his fields to take the cranes and geese which came to feed upon the new-sown corn. Accordingly he took several, both cranes and geese; and among them a Stork, who pleaded hard for his life, and, among other apologies which he made, alleged, that he was neither goose nor crane, but a poor, harmless Stork, who performed his duty to his parents to all intents and purposes, feeding them when they were old, and, as occasion required, carrying them from place to place upon his back. "All this



may be true," replies the Husbandman; "but, as I have taken you in bad company, and in the same crime, you must expect to suffer the same punishment."

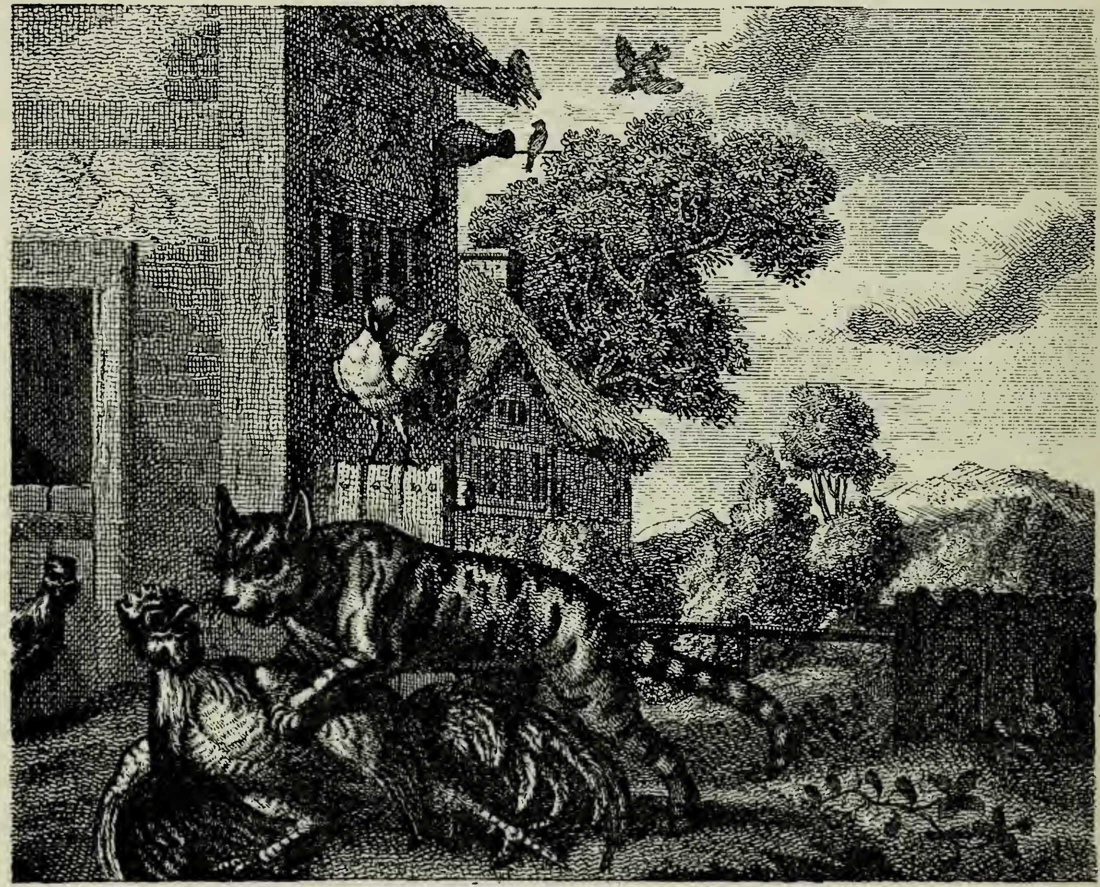
Who friendship with a knave hath made,
Is judged a partner in the trade.

If bad company had nothing else to make us shun and avoid it, this, methinks, might be sufficient, that it infects and taints a man's reputation to as great a degree as if he were thoroughly versed in the wickedness of the whole gang. What is it to me if the thief who robs me of my money gives part of it to build a church? Is he ever the less a thief? Shall a woman's going to prayers twice a day save her reputation, if she is known to be a malicious, lying gossip? No; such mixtures of religion and sin make the offence but the more flagrant, as they convince us that it was not committed out of ignorance. Indeed, there is no living without being guilty of some faults, more or less, which the world ought to be good-natured enough to overlook, in consideration of the general frailty of mankind, when they are not too gross and too abundant; but when we are so abandoned to stupidity, and a neglect of our reputation, as to keep bad company, however little we may be criminal in reality, we must expect the same censure and punishment as is due to the most notorious of our companions.

FABLE LVII.

THE CAT AND THE COCK.

THE Cat, having a mind to make a meal of the Cock, seized him one morning by surprise, and asked him what he could say for himself, why slaughter should not pass upon him?



The Cock replied, that he was serviceable to mankind by crowing in the morning, and calling them up to their daily labour. "That is true," says the Cat, "and is the very objection that I have against you; for you make such a shrill, impertinent noise, that people cannot sleep for you." At which word she gave him a pinch, and so made an end both of the Cock and of the story.

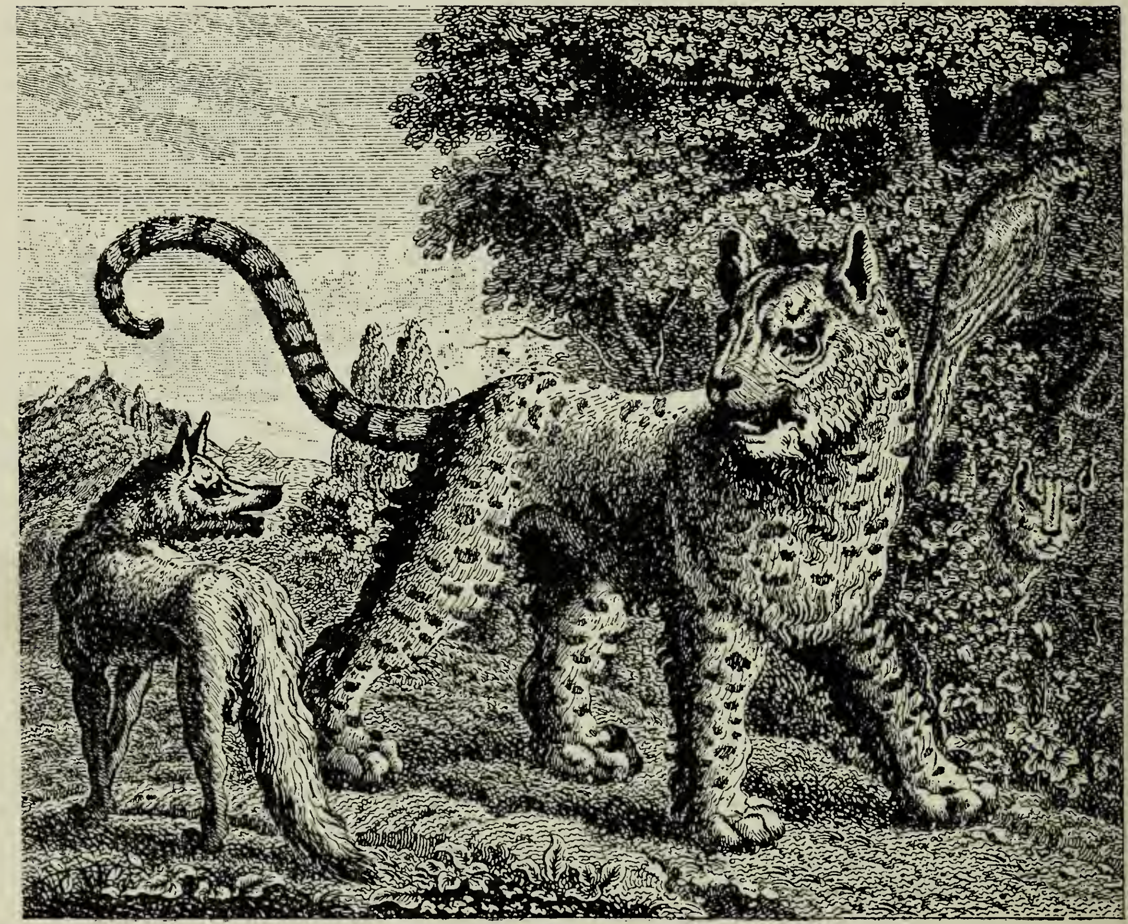
A knock-down argument: 'tis but a word and a blow.

When a wicked man in power has a mind to glut his appetite in any respect, innocence, or even merit, is no protection against him. The cries of justice and the voice of reason are of no effect upon a conscience hardened in iniquity, and a mind versed in a long practice of wrong and robbery. Remonstrances, however reasonably urged or movingly couched, have no more influence upon the heart of such a one, than the gentle evening breeze has upon the oak when it whispers among its branches, or the rising surges upon the deaf rock when they dash and break against its sides.

FABLE LVIII.

The Leopard and the Fox.

The Leopard one day took it into his head to value himself upon the great variety and beauty of his spots, and truly he saw no reason why even the lion should take place of him, since he could not shew so beautiful a skin. As for the rest of the wild beasts of the forest, he treated them all, without distinction, in the most haughty, disdainful manner. But the Fox being among them, went up to him with a great deal of spirit and resolution, and told him that he was mistaken in the value he was pleased to set upon himself; since people of



judgment were not used to form their opinion of merit from an outside appearance, but by considering the good qualities and endowments with which the mind was stored within.

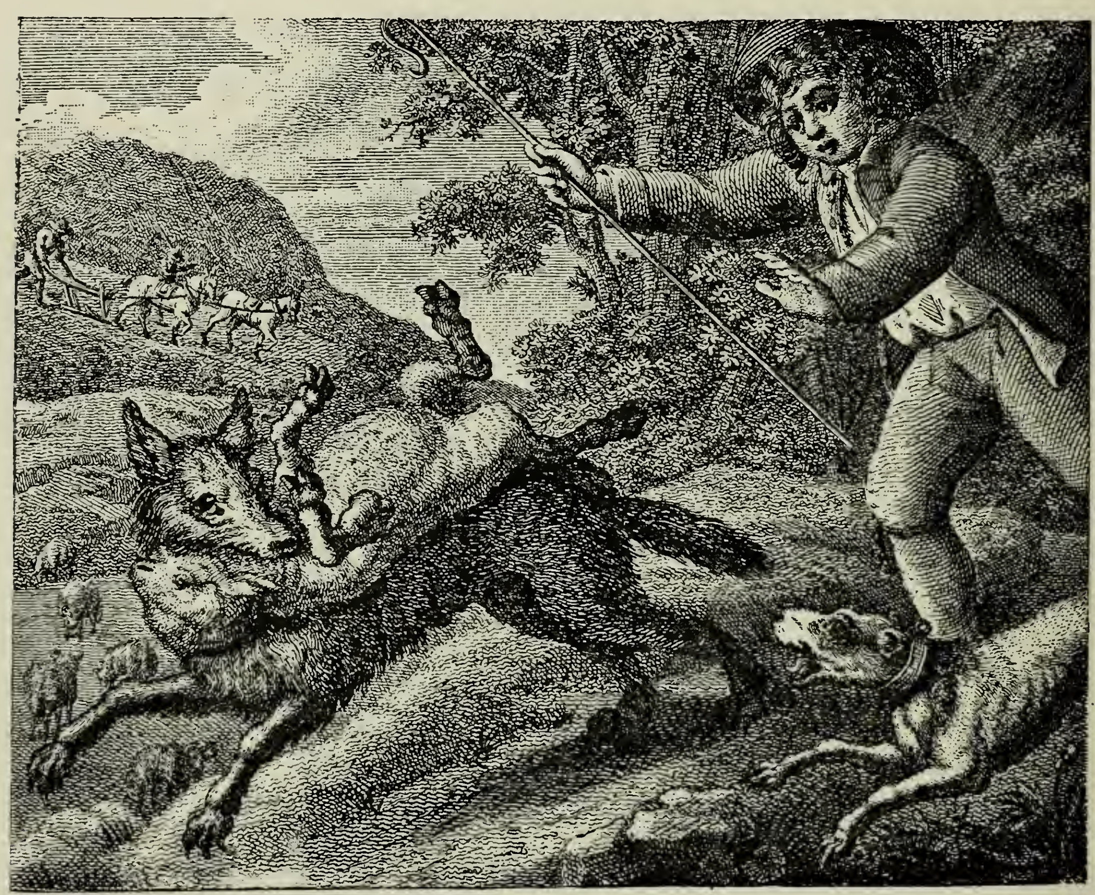
Handsome is that handsome does.

"So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head
The scull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest."

SHAKESPEARE: *The Merchant of Venice.*

FABLE LIX.

THE SHEPHERD'S BOY.



A CERTAIN Shepherd's Boy kept his sheep upon a common, and in sport and wantonness would often cry out, "The Wolf! the Wolf!" By this means he several times drew the husbandmen into an adjoining field from their work; who, finding themselves deluded, resolved for the future to take no notice of his alarm. Soon after the Wolf came indeed. The Boy cried out in earnest; but no heed being given to his cries, the sheep are devoured by the Wolf.

A common liar shall not be believed even when he speaks true.

"Truth! Truth! where is the sound
Of thy calm, unflattering voice to be found?
We may go to the Senate, where wisdom rules
And find but deceived or deceiving fools:
Who dare trust the sages of old,
When one shall unsay what another has told?
And even the lips of childhood and youth
But rarely echo the tones of truth."

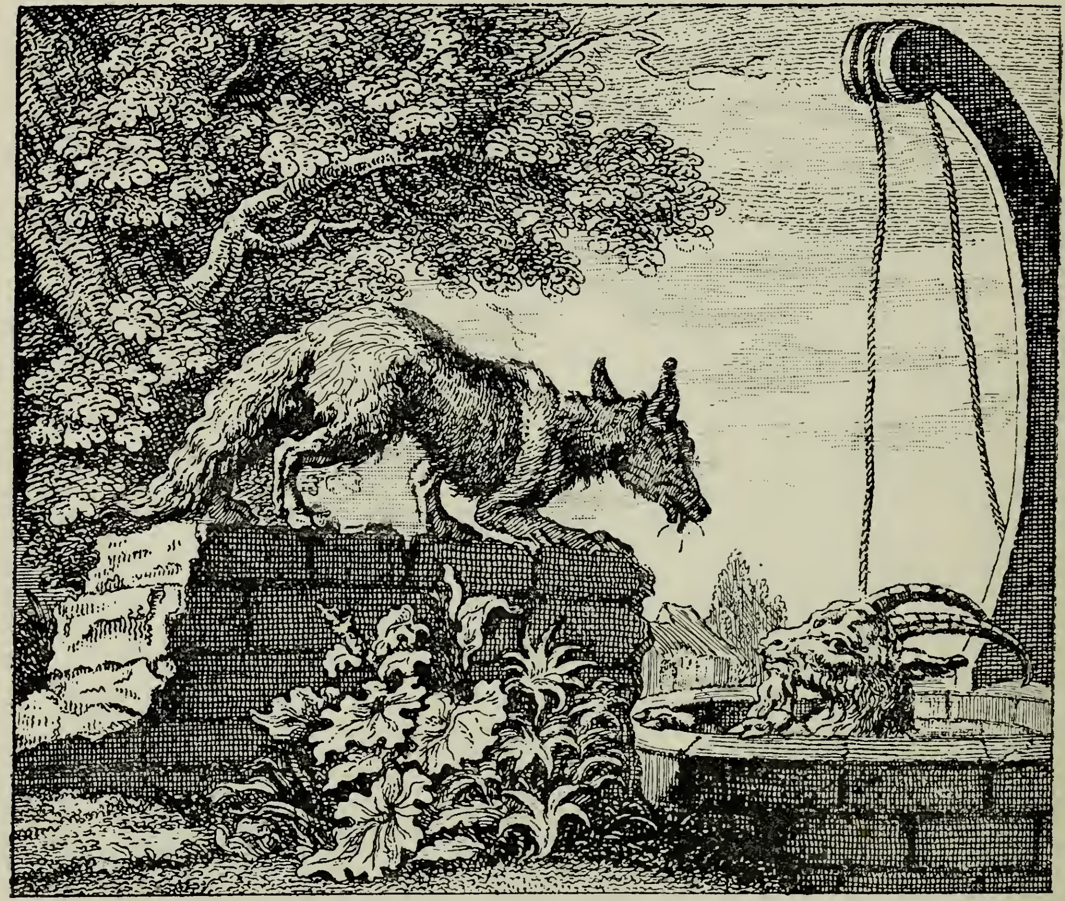
ELIZA COOK.

"It will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious."—BACON.

FABLE LX.

THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

A FOX, having tumbled by chance into a well, had been casting about a long while, to no purpose, how he should get out again; when at last a Goat came to the place, and, wanting to drink, asked Reynard whether the water was good. "Good!" says he: "ay, so sweet that I am afraid I have surfeited myself, I have drank so abundantly." The Goat upon this, without any more ado, leaped in; and the Fox, taking the advantage of his horns, by the assistance of them as nimbly leaped out, leaving the poor Goat at the bottom of the well, to shift for himself.



Look before you leap.

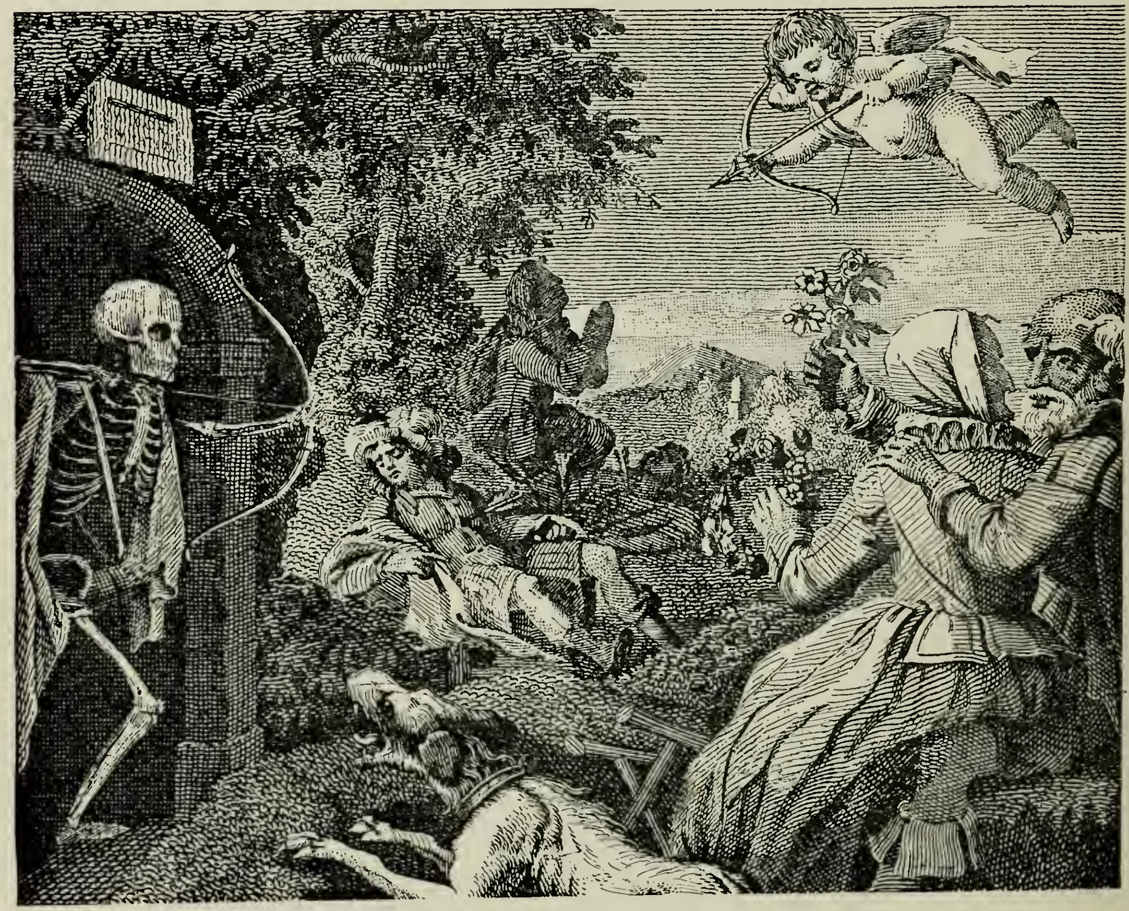
The doctrine taught us by this fable is no more than this, that we ought to consider who it is that advises us before we follow the advice: for, however plausible the counsel may seem, if the person that gives it is a crafty knave, we may be assured that he intends to serve himself in it more than us, if not to erect something to his own advantage out of our ruin.

The little, poor, country attorney, ready to perish, and sunk to the lowest depth of poverty for want of employment, by such arts as these draws the squire, his neighbour, into the gulf of the law; till, laying hold on the branches of his revenue, he lifts himself out of obscurity, and leaves the other immured in the bottom of a mortgage.

FABLE LXI.

Cupid and Death.

Cupid, one sultry summer's noon, tired with play, and faint with heat, went into a cool grotto to repose himself, which happened to be the cave of Death. He threw himself carelessly down on the floor, and his quiver turning topsy-turvy, all the arrows fell out, and mingled with those of Death, which lay scattered up and down the place. When he awoke, he gathered them up as well as he could; but they were so intermingled that, though he knew the certain number, he could not rightly distinguish them; from which it happened



that he took up some of the arrows which belonged to Death, and left several of his own in the room of them. This is the cause that we, now and then, see the hearts of the old and decrepit transfixed with the bolts of Love; and, with equal grief and surprise, behold the youthful blooming part of our species smitten with the darts of Death.

Death reaps the bearded grain at a breath
And the flowers that grow between.

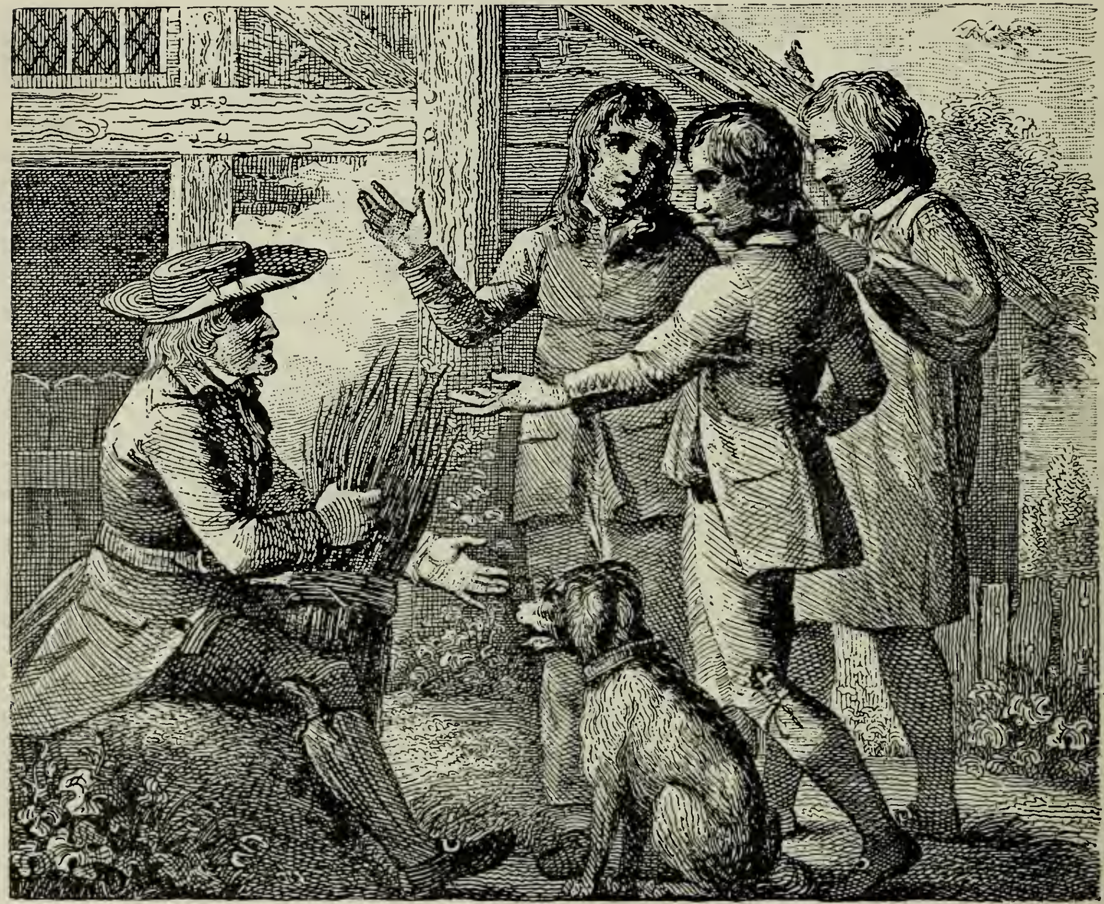
"Come, Lovers, bring your cares,
Bring sigh-perfumed sweets;
Bedew the grave with tears,
Where Death with Virtue meets.
Sigh for the hapless hour
That knit two hearts in one;
And only gave Love power
To die, when 'twas begun."

J. JONES: *Adrasta.*

FABLE LXII.

THE OLD MAN AND HIS SONS.

AN Old Man had many Sons, who were often falling out with one another. When the Father had exerted his authority, and used other means in order to reconcile them, and all to no



purpose, at last he had recourse to this expedient: he ordered his Sons to be called before him, and a short bundle of sticks to be brought; and then commanded them, one by one, to try if, with all their might and strength, they could any of them break it. They all tried, but to no purpose; for the sticks being closely and compactly bound up together, it was impossible for the force of man to do it. After this the Father ordered the bundle to be untied, and gave a single stick to each of his Sons, at the same time bidding him try to break it; which when each did with all imaginable ease, the Father addressed himself to them to this effect:—"O my Sons, behold the power of unity! For if you, in like manner, would but keep yourselves strictly conjoined in the bonds of friendship, it would not be in the power of any mortal to hurt you; but when once the ties of brotherly affection are dissolved, how soon do you fall to pieces, and are liable to be violated by every injurious hand that assaults you!"

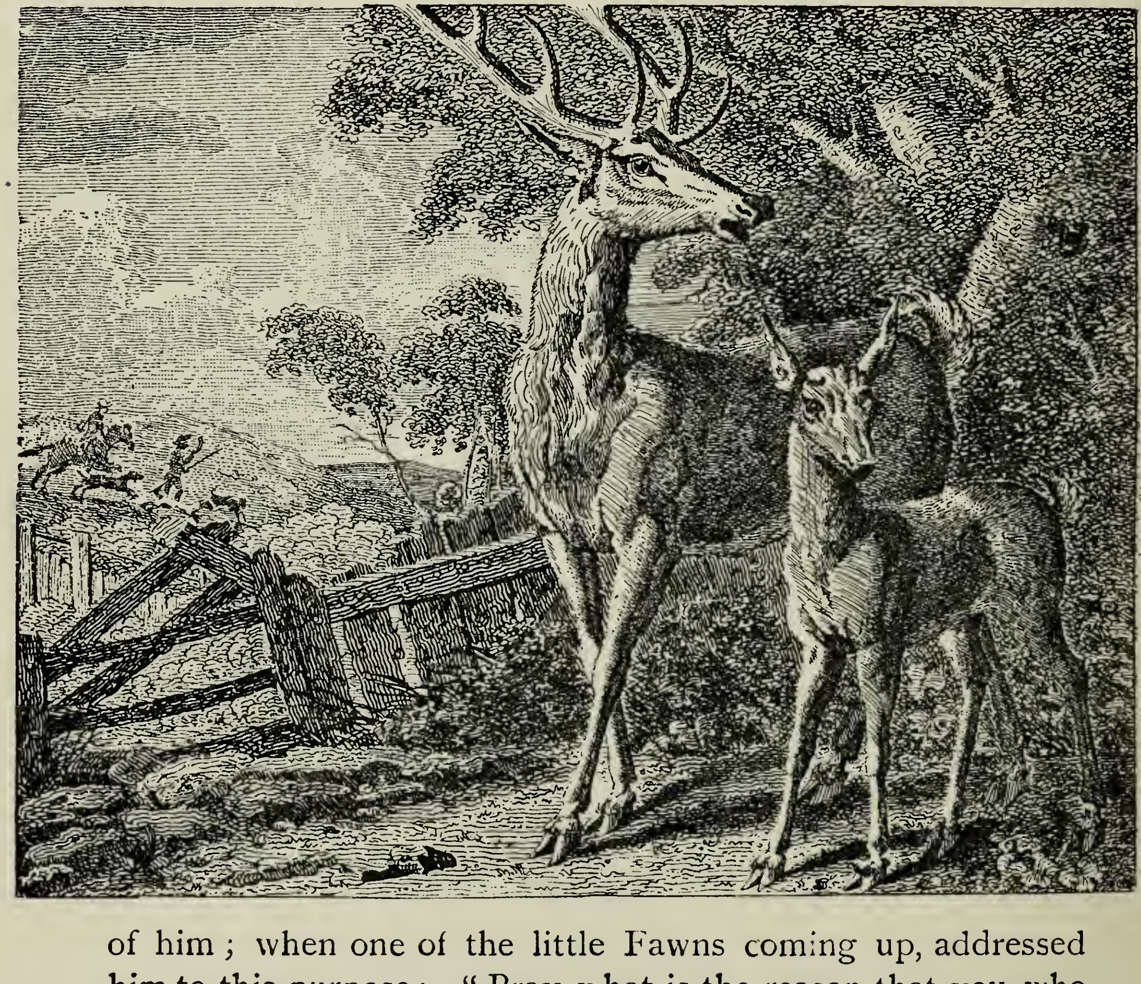
A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

"A bough, by being lopped off from another, must of necessity be lopped from the whole tree; thus a man that breaks with another loses the benefit of the whole community. It is true a bough is lopped off by a foreign hand, but the man pulls himself asunder by his untoward aversion and hatred to his neighbour. He little thinks how he disincorporates himself by this unhappy division from the body of mankind! And here the goodness of God who founded this society is extraordinary. He has put it in our power to grow to the limb we left, and come again into the advantage of the main body. But if this misfortune is often repeated, it will be a hard matter to restore the part and close the division. For, as gardeners observe, a bough cut off and grafted in again is not in the same good condition with another which always flourished upon the trunk. We should be one in growth, though not in sympathy."—MARCUS AURELIUS.

FABLE LXIII.

THE STAG AND THE FAWN.

A STAG, grown old and mischievous, was, according to custom, stamping with his foot, making offers with his head, and bellowing so terribly, that the whole herd quaked for fear of him; when one of the little Fawns coming up, addressed him to this purpose:—"Pray, what is the reason that you, who are so stout and formidable at all other times, if you do but hear the cry of the hounds are ready to fly out of your skin for fear?"—"What you observe is true," replied the Stag, "though I know not how to account for it: I am indeed



vigorous, and able enough, I think, to make my party good anywhere, and often resolve with myself that nothing shall ever dismay my courage for the future; but, alas! I no sooner hear the voice of a hound but all my spirits fail me, and I cannot help making off as fast as ever my legs can carry me."

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

"It must be owned that fear is a very powerful passion, since it is esteemed one of the greatest virtues to subdue it. It being implanted in us for our preservation, it is no wonder that it sticks close to us as long as we have anything to preserve. But as life and all its enjoyments would be scarce worth the keeping if we were under a perpetual dread of losing them, it is the business of religion and philosophy to free us from all unnecessary anxieties, and direct our fear to its proper object.

"If we consider the painfulness of this passion, and the violent effects it produces, we shall see how dangerous it is to give way to it upon slight occasions. Some have frightened themselves into madness, others have given up their lives to these apprehensions. The story of a man who grew grey in the space of one night's anxiety is very famous.

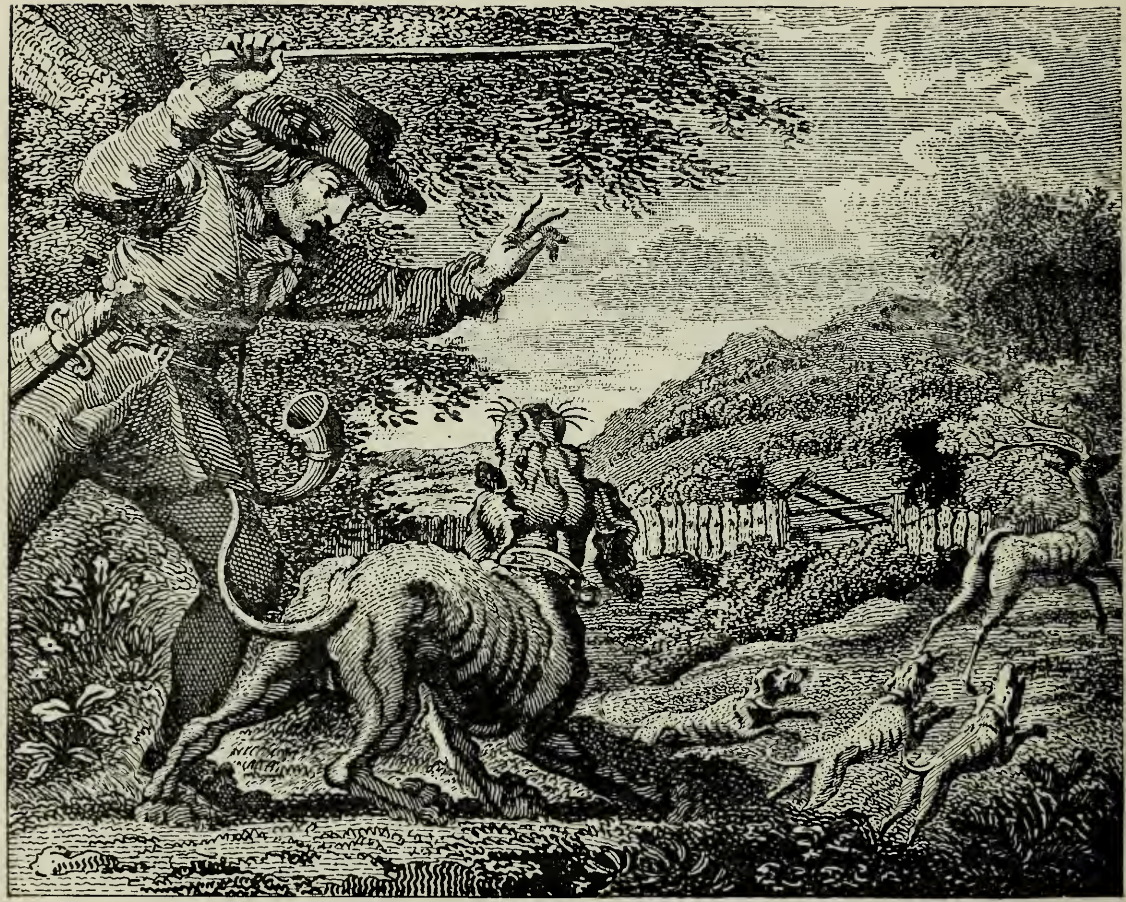
"'A tedious night indeed, that makes a young man old.'

"These apprehensions, if they proceed from a consciousness of guilt, are the sad warnings of reason; and may excite our pity, but admit of no remedy. When the hand of the Almighty is visibly lifted against the impious, the heart of mortal man cannot withstand Him. . . . . To fear so justly grounded, no remedy can be proposed; but a man who hath no great guilt hanging upon his mind, who walks in the plain path of justice and integrity, and yet, either by natural complexion, or confirmed prejudices, or neglect of serious reflection, suffers himself to be moved by this abject and unmanly passion, would do well to consider that there is nothing to deserve his fear but that beneficent Being who is his friend, his protector, his father."
—*Spectator*.

FABLE LXIV.

THE OLD HOUND.

An old Hound, who had been an excellent good one in his time, and given his master great sport and satisfaction in many a chase, at last, by the effect of years, became feeble and unserviceable. However, being in the field one day, when the stag was almost run down, he happened to be the first that came in with him, and seized him by one of his haunches; but, his decayed and broken teeth not being able to keep their hold, the deer escaped, and threw him quite out. Upon which his master, being in a great passion, and going to strike him,



the honest old creature is said to have barked out his apology: —"Ah! do not strike your poor old servant; it is not my heart and inclination, but my strength and speed that fail you. If what I now am displeases, pray don't forget what I have been."

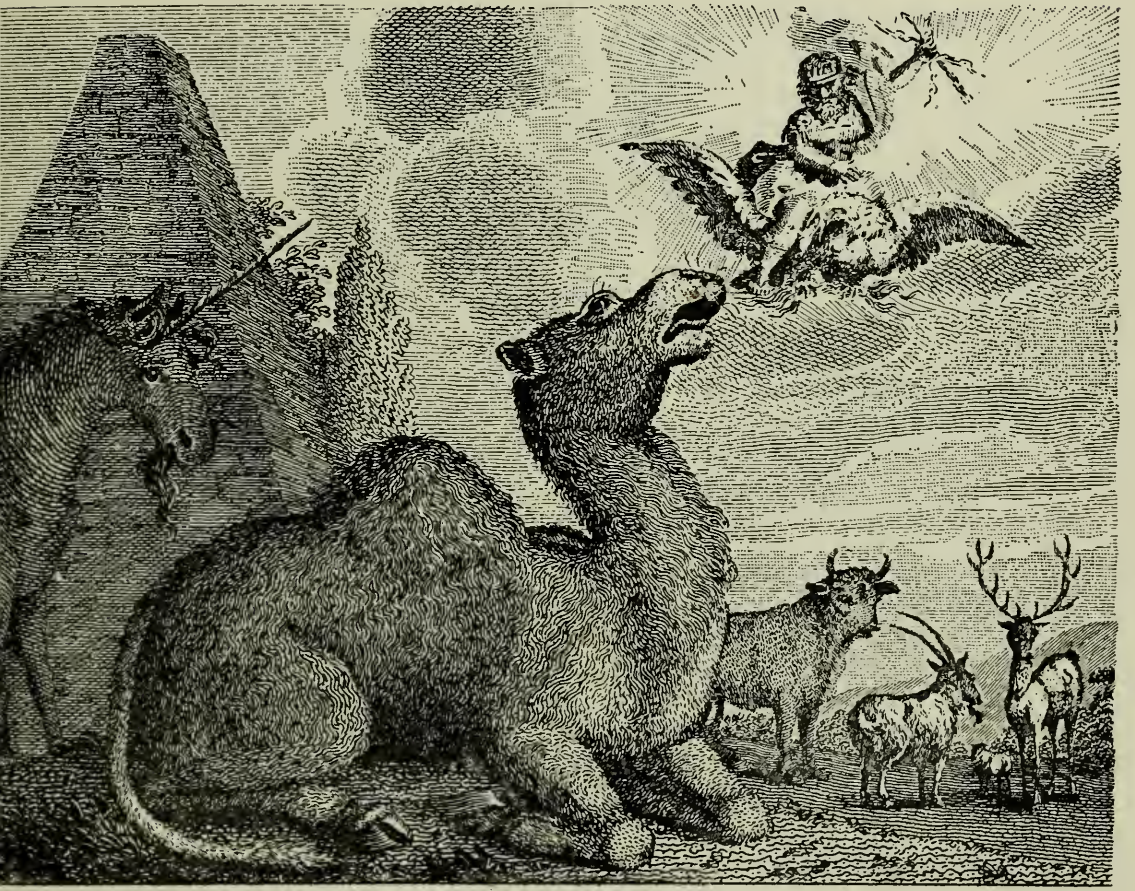
Men shut their doors against a setting sun.

"Goodness moves in a larger sphere than justice; the obligation of law and equity reach only to mankind, but kindness and beneficence should be extended to creatures of every species; and these still flow from the breast of a well-natured man, as streams that issue from the living fountain. A good man will take care of his horses and dogs, not only while they are young, but when old and past service. Thus the people of Athens, when they had finished the temple called Hecatompedon, set at liberty the beasts of burden that had been chiefly employed in that work, suffering them to pasture at large, free from any further service. It is said that one of these afterwards came of its own accord to work, and, putting itself at the head of the labouring cattle, marched before them to the citadel. This pleased the people, and they made a decree that it should be kept at the public charge as long as it lived. The graves of Cimon's mares, with which he thrice conquered at the Olympic games, are still to be seen near his own tomb. Many have shewn particular marks of regard in burying the dogs which they had cherished and been fond of; and among the rest, Xanthippus, of old, whose dog swam by the side of his galley to Salamis, when the Athenians were forced to abandon their city, was afterwards buried by his master upon a promontory, which to this day is called the 'dog's grave.' We certainly ought not to treat living creatures like shoes or household goods, which, when worn out with use, we throw away; and, were it only to learn benevolence to human kind, we should be merciful to other creatures. For my own part, I would not sell even an old ox that had laboured for me; much less would I remove, for the sake of a little money, a man grown old in my service, from his usual place and diet; for to him, poor man! it would be as bad as banishment, since he could be of no more use to the buyer than he was to the seller. But Cato, as if he took a pride in these things, tells us that, when consul, he left his war-horse in Spain, to save the public the charge of his freight. Whether such things as these are instances of greatness or littleness of soul, let the reader judge for himself.—*Plutarch's Lives: Cato the Censor.*

FABLE LXV.

JUPITER AND THE CAMEL.

THE Camel presented a petition to Jupiter, complaining of the hardship of his case in not having, like bulls and other creatures, horns, or any weapons of defence, to protect himself from the attacks of his enemies, and praying that relief might be given him in such manner as might be thought most expedient. Jupiter could not help smiling at the impertinent address of the great silly beast, but, however, rejected the petition; and told him that, so far from granting his unreasonable request, henceforward he would take care his ears should be shortened, as a punishment for his presumptuous importunity.

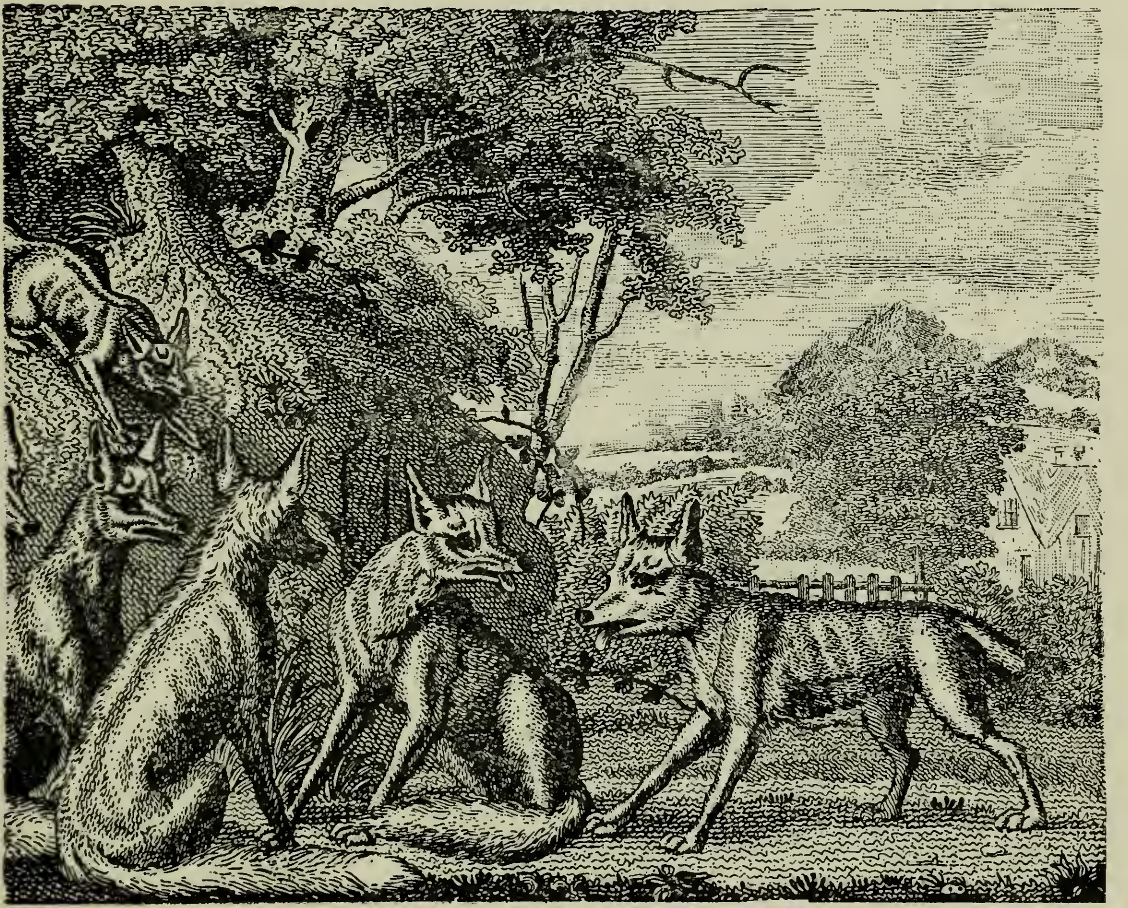


Every man shall bear his own burden.

"Guide not the hand of God, nor order the fingers of the Almighty unto thy will and pleasure; but sit quiet in the soft showers of Providence, and favourable distribution in this world, either to thyself or others. And since not only judgments have their errands, but mercies their commissions, snatch not at every favour, nor think thyself passed by if they fall upon thy neighbour. Rake not up envious displacencies at things successful unto others, which the wise Disposer of all thinks not fit for thyself. Reconcile the events of things unto both beings, that is, of this world and the next; so will there not seem so many riddles in Providence, nor various inequalities in the dispensation of things below."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Christian Morals.*

FABLE LXVI.

THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL.



A FOX, being caught in a steel trap by his tail, was glad to compound for his escape with the loss of it; but, upon coming abroad into the world, began to be so sensible of the disgrace such a defect would bring upon him, that he almost wished he had died rather than left it behind him. However, to make the best of a bad matter, he formed a project in his head to call an assembly of the rest of the foxes, and propose it for their imitation, as a fashion which would be very agreeable and becoming. He did so, and made a long harangue upon the unprofitableness of tails in general, and endeavoured chiefly to show the awkwardness and inconvenience of a fox's tail in particular ; adding, that it would be both more graceful and more expeditious to be altogether without them; and that, for his part, what he had only imagined and conjectured before, he now found by experience; for that he never enjoyed himself so well, and found himself so easy, as he had done since he cut off his tail. He said no more, but looked about with a brisk air, to see what proselytes he had gained ; when a sly old thief in the company, who understood trap, answered him, with a leer,—" I believe you may have found a conveniency in parting with your tail, and when we are in the same circumstances perhaps we may do so too."

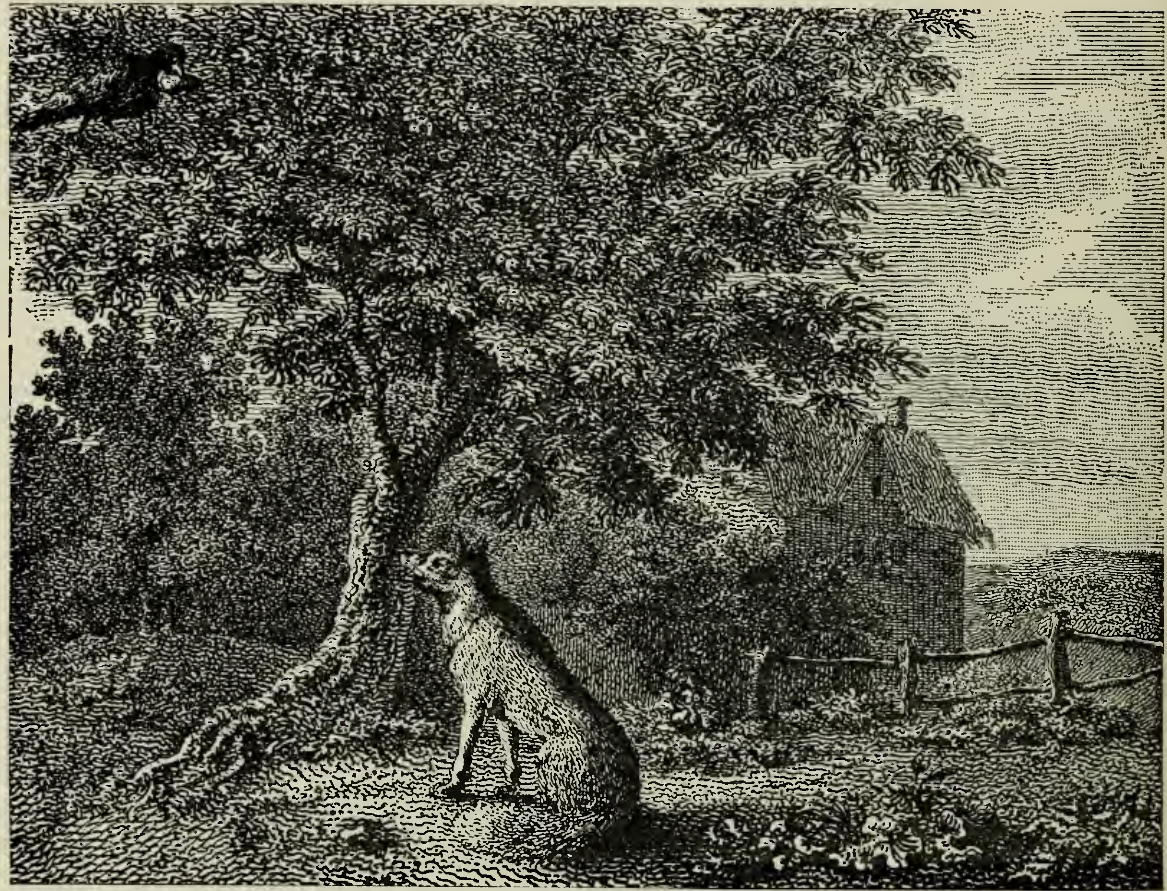
From stratagem to stratagem we run.

"Fashions have a short life or a long one, according as it suits the makers to startle us with a variety, or save themselves observation of a defect. Hence, fashions set by young or handsome people are fugitive, and such are for the most part those that bring custom to the milliner. If we keep watch on an older one, we shall generally trace it, unless of general convenience, to some pertinacity on the part of the aged. Even fashions, otherwise convenient, as the trousers that have so long taken place of small clothes, often perhaps owe their continuance to some general defect, which they help to screen. . . . Observe that polished old gentleman who bows so well, and is conversing with the most agreeable of physicians. He made a great impression in his youth, and was naturally loath to give it up. On a sudden he finds his throat not so juvenile as he could wish it. Up goes his stock, and enlarges. He rests both his cheeks upon it, the chin settling comfortably upon a bend in the middle, as becomes its delicacy. By and by, he thinks the cheeks themselves do not present as good an aspect as with so young a heart might in reason be expected; and forth issue the points of his shirt collar, and give them an investment at once cherishing and spirited. Thirdly, he suspects his waist to have played him a trick of good living, and surpassed the bounds of youth and elegance before he was well aware of it. Therefore, to keep it seemingly, if not actually within limits, forth he sends a frill in the first instance, and a padded set of lapels afterwards. . . . But, finally, the legs: they were amongst the handsomest in the world; and how did they not dance! What conquests did they not achieve in the time of hoop-petticoats and toupees? And long afterwards, were not Apollo and Hercules found in them together, to the delight of the dowagers. And shall the gods be treated with disrespect, when the heaviness of change comes upon them? No. Round comes the kindly trouserian veil (as Dyer of *The Fleece* would have it); the legs retreat like other conquerors into retirement; and only the lustre of their glory remains, such as Buonaparte might have envied."—LEIGH HUNT.

FABLE LXVII.

The Fox and the Crow.

A Crow having taken a piece of cheese out of a cottage window, flew up into a high tree with it, in order to eat it; which a Fox observing, came and sat underneath, and began to compliment the Crow upon the subject of her beauty. "I protest," says he, "I never observed it before, but your feathers are of a more delicate white than any that ever I saw in my life! Ah! what a fine shape and graceful turn of body is there! And I make no question but you have a tolerable voice. If it is but as fine as your complexion, I do not know a bird that can pretend to stand in competition with you."



The Crow, tickled with this very civil language, nestled and wriggled about, and hardly knew where she was; but thinking the Fox a little dubious as to the particular of her voice, and having a mind to set him right in that matter, began to sing, and in the same instant let the cheese drop out of her mouth. This being what the Fox wanted, he chopped it up in a moment, and trotted away, laughing to himself at the easy credulity of the Crow.

Oh that men's ears should be
To counsel deaf, but not to flattery.

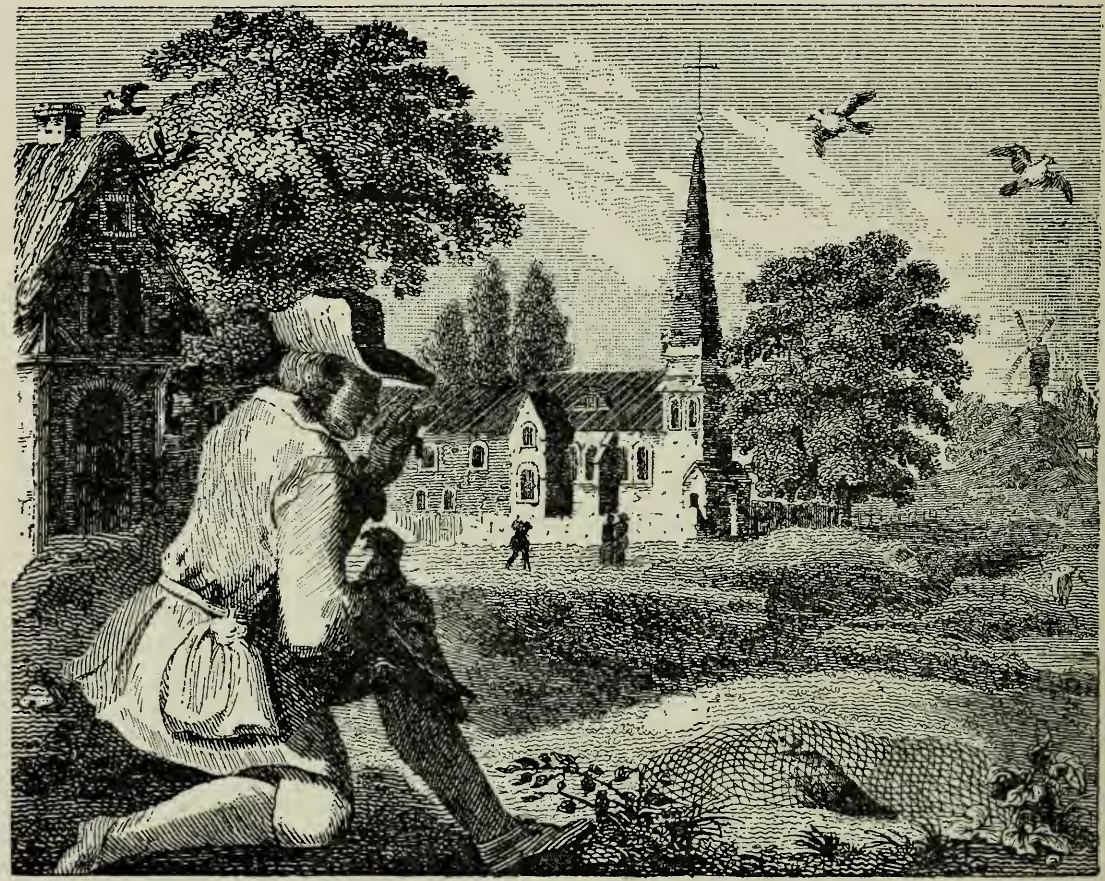
"*Duke.* There is a lady in Verona here
Whom I affect; but she is nice and coy
And nought esteems my aged eloquence:
Now therefore would I have thee to my tutor—
For long agone I have forgot to court;
Besides, the fashion of the time is changed—
How and which way I may bestow myself
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.
Valentine. Win her with gifts, if she respect not words:
Dumb jewels often in their silent kind
More than quick words do move a woman's mind.
Duke. But she did scorn a present that I sent her.
Valentine. A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her.
Send her another; never give her o'er;
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you:
If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone;
For why, the fools are mad, if left alone.
Take no repulse, whatever she doth say;
For 'get you gone,' she doth not mean 'away'!
Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces;
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces.
That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman."

SHAKESPEARE: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

FABLE LXVIII.

The Hawk and the Farmer.

A Hawk, pursuing a pigeon over a corn-field with great eagerness and force, threw himself into a net which a husbandman had planted there to take the crows; who being employed not far off, and seeing the Hawk fluttering in the net, came and took him: but, just as he was going to kill him, the Hawk besought him to let him go, assuring him that he was only following a pigeon, and neither intended nor had done any harm to him. To whom the Farmer replied—"And what harm had the poor pigeon done to you?" Upon which he wrung his head off immediately.



Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

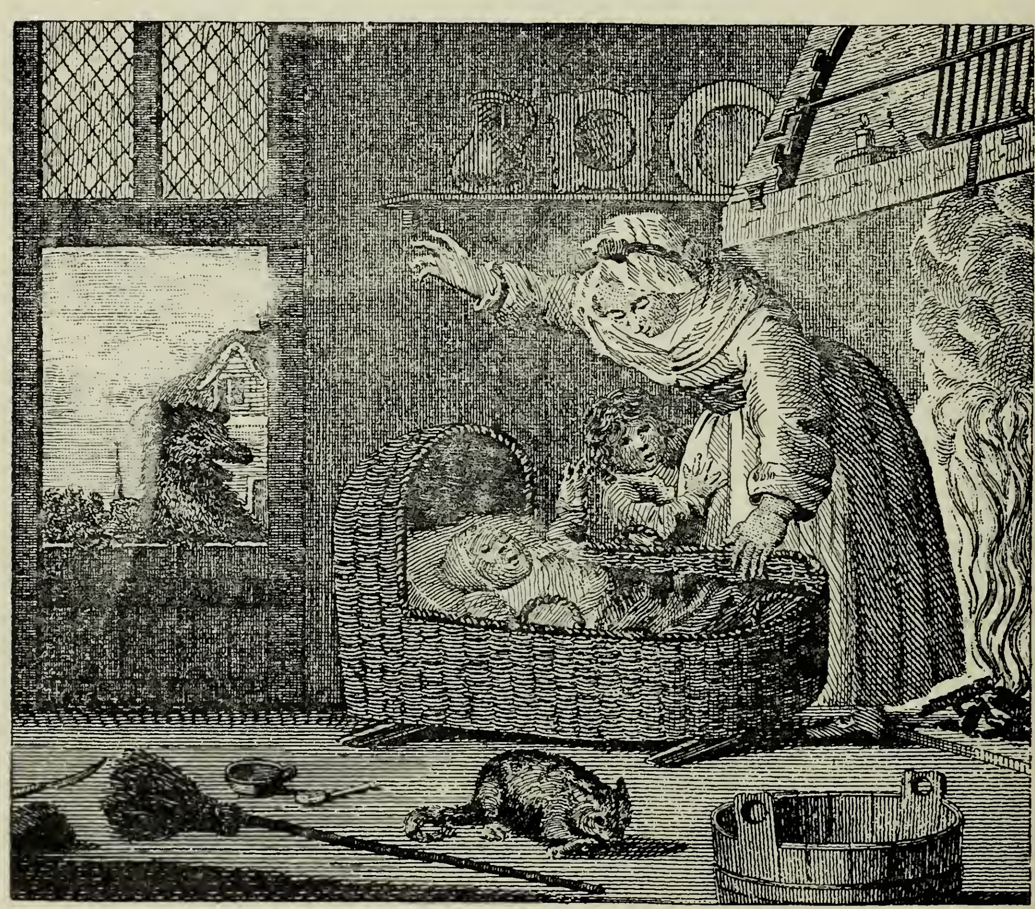
"Fit retribution by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace,
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants well-measured terrors in the road
Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and broad,
And, the main fear once doomed to banishment,
Far oftener then, bad ushering worse event,
Blood would be spilt that in his dark abode
Crime might lie better hid. And, should the change
Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
And, guilt escaping, passion then might plead
In angry spirits for her old free range,
And the 'wild justice of revenge' prevail."

WORDSWORTH.

FABLE LXIX.

THE NURSE AND THE WOLF.

A NURSE, who was endeavouring to quiet a froward bawling child, among other attempts, threatened to throw it out of doors to the Wolf, if it did not leave off crying. A Wolf, who chanced to be prowling near the door just at that time, heard the expression, and, believing the woman to be in earnest, waited a long while about the house in expectation of seeing her words made good. But at last the child, wearied with its own importunities, fell asleep, and the poor Wolf was forced to return back to the woods, empty and supperless. The fox



meeting him, and surprised to see him going home so thin and disconsolate, asked him what the matter was, and how he came to speed no better that night?—"Ah! do not ask me," says he; "I was so silly as to believe what the Nurse said, and have been disappointed."

What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

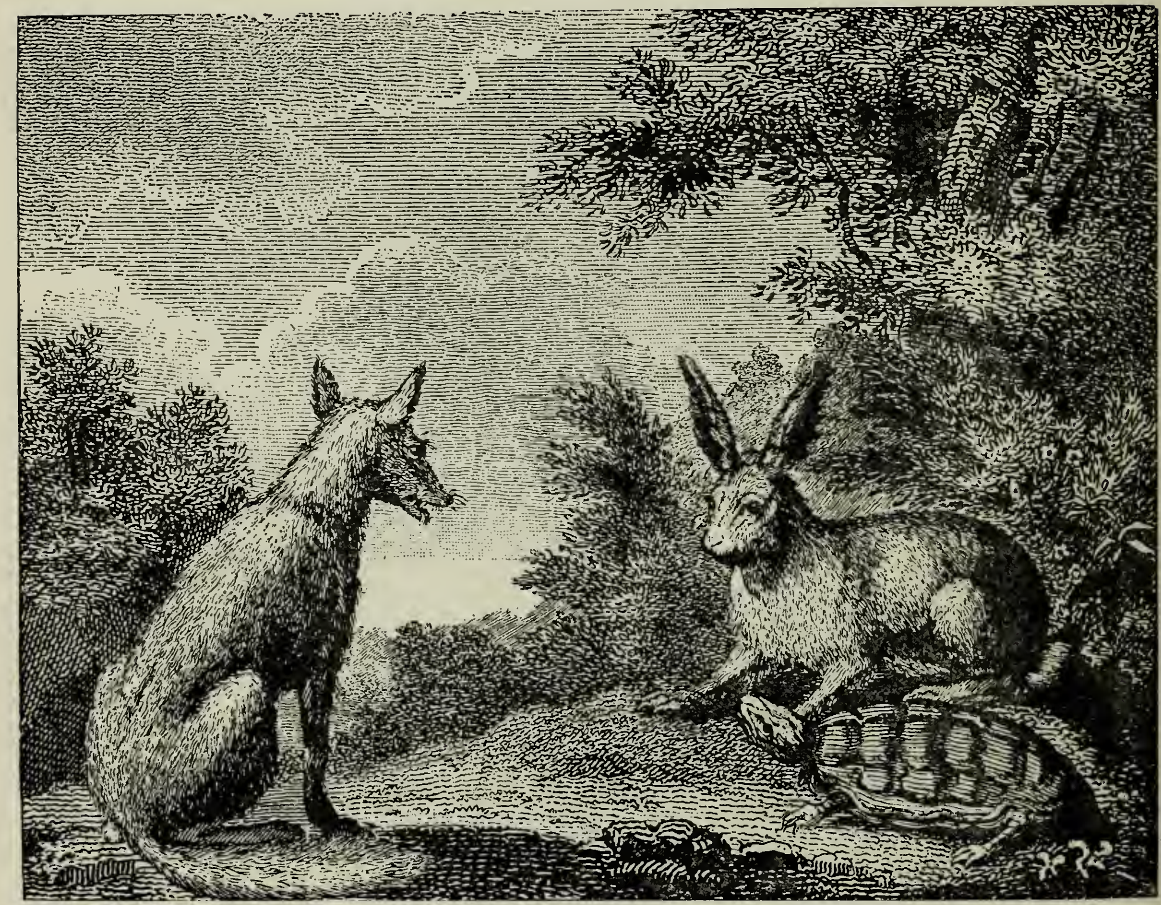
"Three things a wise man will not trust:
The wind, the sunshine of an April day,
And woman's plighted faith. I have beheld
The weathercock upon the steeple point
Steady from morn till eve, and I have seen
The bees go forth upon an April morn,
Secure the sunshine will not end in showers;
But when was woman true?"

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

FABLE LXX.

The Hare and the Tortoise.

A Hare insulted a Tortoise upon account of his slowness, and vainly boasted of her own great speed in running.—"Let us make a match," replied the Tortoise; "I will run with you five miles for five pounds, and the fox yonder shall be the umpire of the race." The Hare agreed; and away they both started together. But the Hare, by reason of her exceeding swiftness, outran the Tortoise to such a degree, that she made a jest of the matter; and, finding herself a little tired, squatted in a tuft of fern that grew by the way, and took a nap; think-



ing that, if the Tortoise went by, she could at any time fetch him up with all the ease imaginable. In the meanwhile the Tortoise came jogging on with slow but continued motion; and the Hare, out of a too great security and confidence of victory, oversleeping herself, the Tortoise arrived at the end of the race first.

Up and be doing.

"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

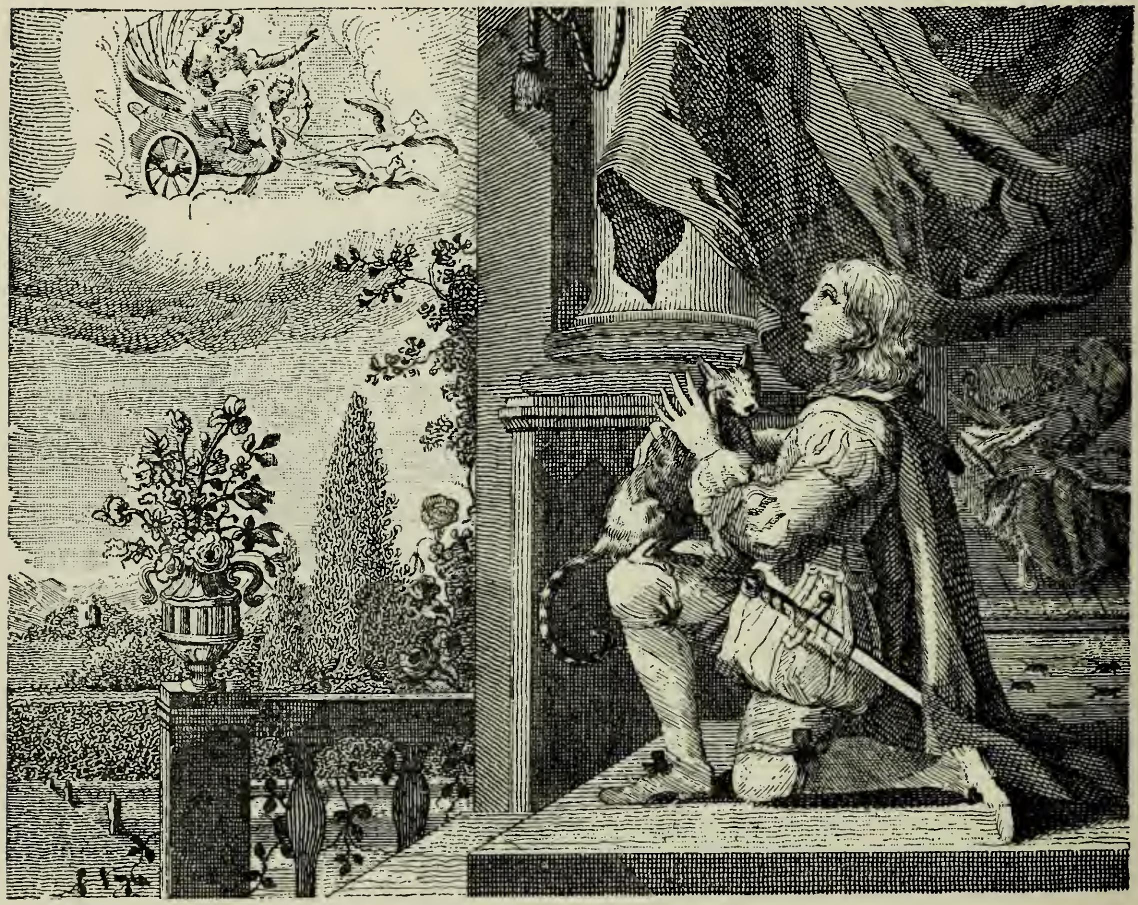
"For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."—*Ecclesiastes* ix. 11, 12.

"Remember how often you have postponed mending your interest, and let slip those opportunities the gods have given you. It is now high time to consider what sort of world you are part of, and from what kind of governor of it you are descended; that you have a set period assigned you to act in, and unless you improve it to brighten and compose your thoughts it will quickly run off with you, and be lost beyond recovery."—MARCUS AURELIUS.

FABLE LXXI.

THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS CAT.

A CERTAIN Young Man used to play with a Cat, of which he grew so fond, that at last he fell in love with it, and to such a degree that he could rest neither night nor day for the excess of his passion. At last he prayed to Venus, the goddess of beauty, to pity him, and relieve his pain. The good-natured goddess was propitious, and heard his prayers: before he rose up from kneeling, the Cat, which he held in his arms, was transformed into a beautiful girl. The youth was transported with joy, and married her that very day. Unfortunately, no



sooner was the wedding celebrated but she heard a mouse behind the hangings, and sprang from his arms to pursue it. Venus, offended to see her sacred rites profaned by such an indecent behaviour, and perceiving that her new convert, though a woman in outward appearance, was a Cat in her heart, she made her return to her old form again, that her manners and person might be agreeable to each other.

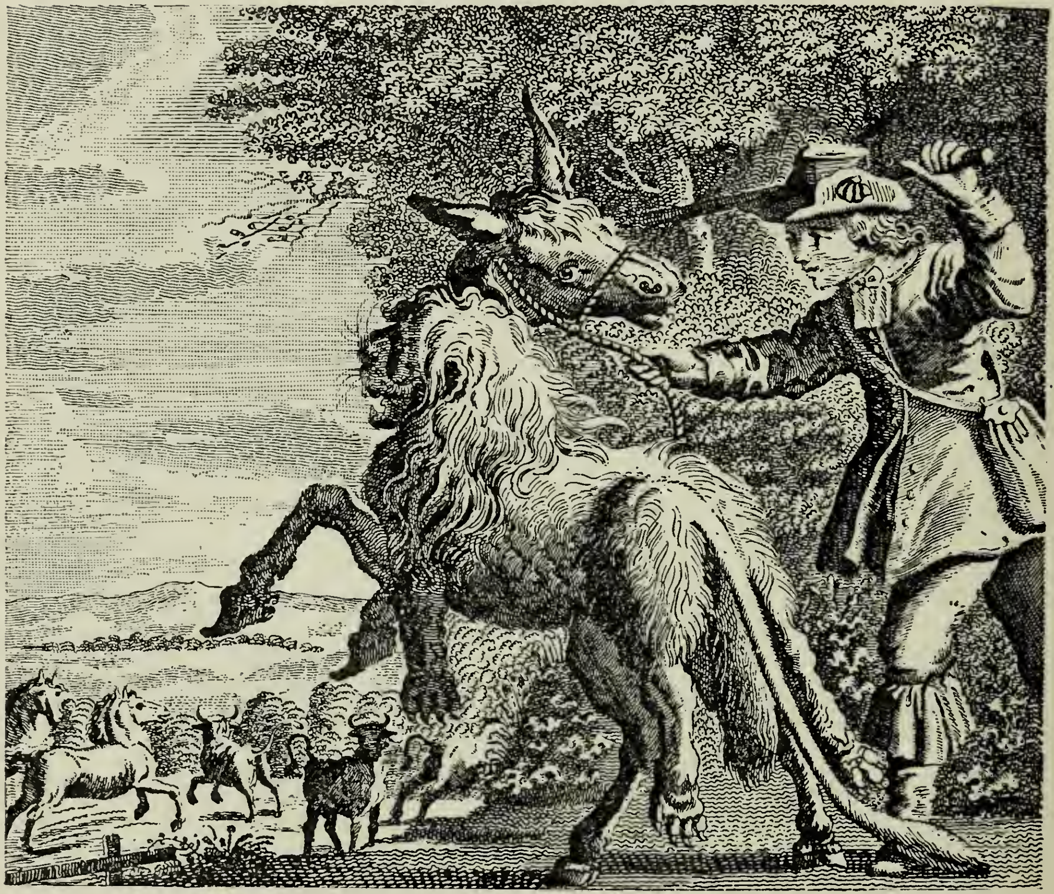
What's bred in the bone will never out of the flesh.

"A story recorded of Cecco d'Ascoli and of Dante, on the subject of natural and acquired genius, may illustrate the present topic. Cecco maintained that nature was more potent than art, while Dante asserted the contrary. To prove his principle, the great Italian bard referred to his cat, which, by repeated practice, he had taught to hold a candle in its paw while he supped or read. Cecco desired to witness the experiment, and came not unprepared for his purpose. When Dante's cat was performing its part, Cecco, lifting up the lid of a pot which he had filled with mice, the creature of art instantly showed the weakness of a talent merely acquired, and, dropping the candle, flew on the mice with all its instinctive propensity. Dante was himself disconcerted; and it was adjudged that the advocate for the occult principle of native faculties had gained his cause."—ISAAC D'ISRAELI.

FABLE LXXII.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

AN Ass finding the skin of a Lion, put it on; and, going into the woods and pastures, threw all the flocks and herds into a terrible consternation. At last, meeting his owner, he would have frightened him also; but the good man, seeing his long ears stick out, presently knew him, and with a good cudgel made him sensible that, notwithstanding his being dressed in a Lion's Skin, he was really no more than an Ass.



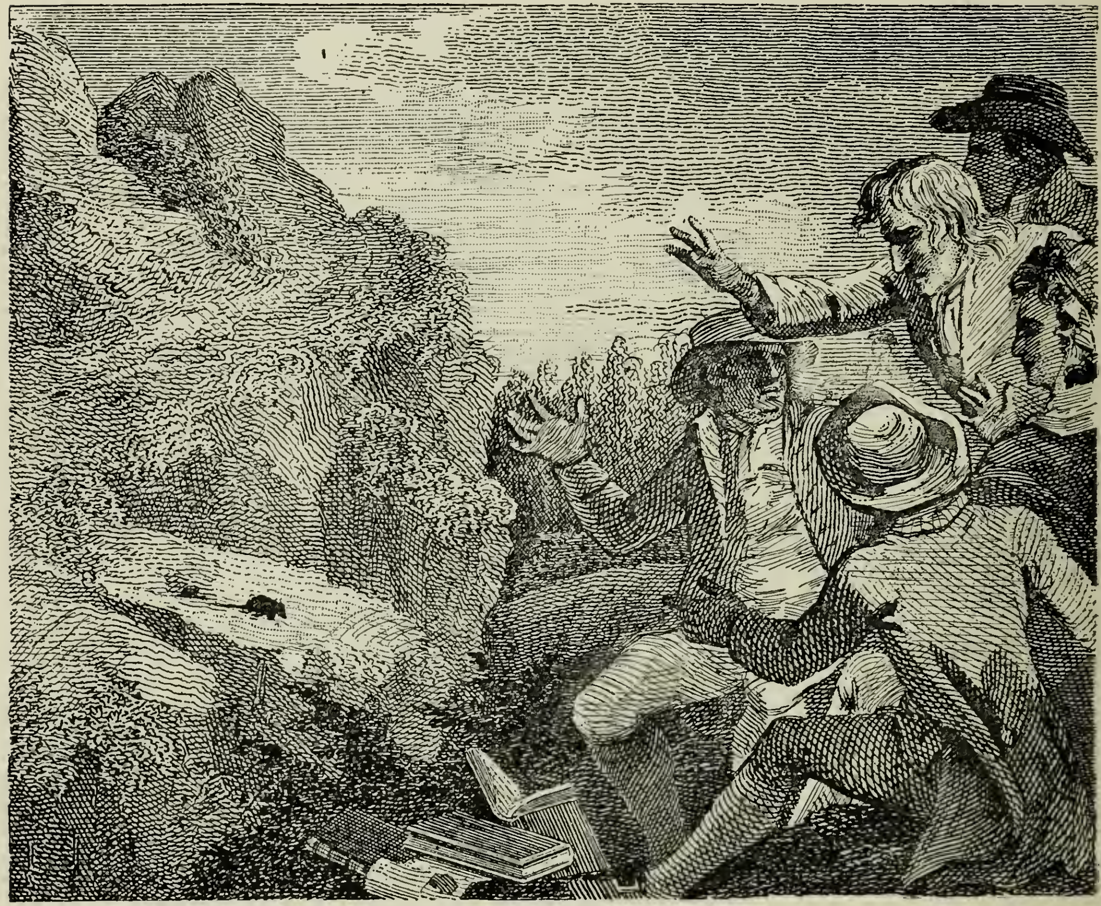
Thou wear a lion's hide! doff it for shame,
And hang a calf's skin on those recreant limbs.

"There is in human nature a general inclination to make people stare; and every wise man has himself to cure of it, and does cure himself. If you wish to make people stare by doing better than others, why, make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare, by being absurd. I may do it by going into a drawing-room without my shoes. You remember the gentleman in *The Spectator* who had a commission of lunacy taken out against him for his extreme singularity, such as never wearing a wig, but a nightcap. Now, sir, abstractedly, the nightcap was best; but relatively the advantage was overbalanced by his making the boys run after him."—BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson.*

FABLE LXXIII.

THE MOUNTAINS IN LABOUR.

THE Mountains were said to be in labour, and uttered most dreadful groans. People came together far and near to see what birth would be produced; and, after they waited a considerable time in expectation, out crept a Mouse.



Great cry and little wool.

" *Glendower.* At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and at my birth

The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward.

Hotspur. Why, so it would have done at the same season, if your mother's cat had but kittened, though yourself had never been born.

Glendower. I say the earth did shake when I was born.

Hotspur. And I say the earth was not of my mind,
If you suppose as fearing you it shook.

Glendower. The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble.

Hotspur. O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,
And not in fear of your nativity.
Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pinched and vexed
By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb; which, for enlargement striving,
Shakes the old beldam earth and topples down
Steeples and moss-grown towers. At your birth
Our grandam earth, having this distemperature,
In passion shook.

Glendower. Cousin, of many men
I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields.
These signs have marked me extraordinary;
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.

. . . .

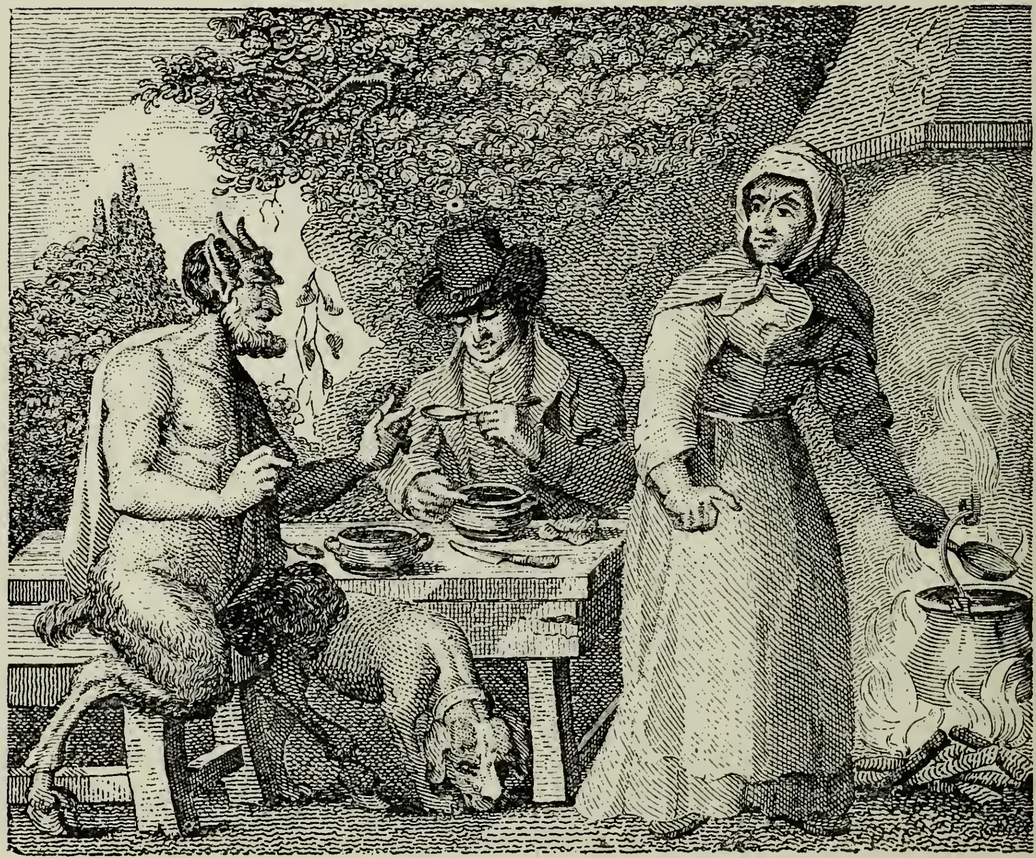
. . . .

Hotspur. I think there's no man speaks better Welsh. I'll to dinner."

SHAKESPEARE: *King Henry IV.*

FABLE LXXIV.

THE SATYR AND THE TRAVELLER.



A SATYR, as he was ranging the forest in an exceeding cold, snowy season, met with a Traveller half-starved with the extremity of the weather. He took compassion on him, and kindly invited him home to a warm, comfortable cave he had in the hollow of a rock. As soon as they had entered and sat down, notwithstanding there was a good fire in the place, the chilly Traveller could not forbear blowing his finger-ends. Upon the Satyr's asking him why he did so, he answered, that he did it to warm his hands. The honest sylvan having seen little of the world, admired a man who was master of so valuable a quality as that of blowing heat, and therefore was resolved to entertain him in the best manner he could. He spread the table before him with dried fruits of several sorts; and produced a remnant of cold cordial wine, which, as the rigour of the season made very proper, he mulled with some warm spices, infused over the fire, and presented to his shivering guest. But this the Traveller thought fit to blow likewise; and upon the Satyr's demanding a reason why he blew again, he replied, to cool his dish. This second answer provoked the Satyr's indignation as much as the first had kindled his surprise; so, taking the man by the shoulder, he thrust him out of doors, saying he would have nothing to do with a wretch who had so vile a quality as to blow hot and cold with the same mouth.

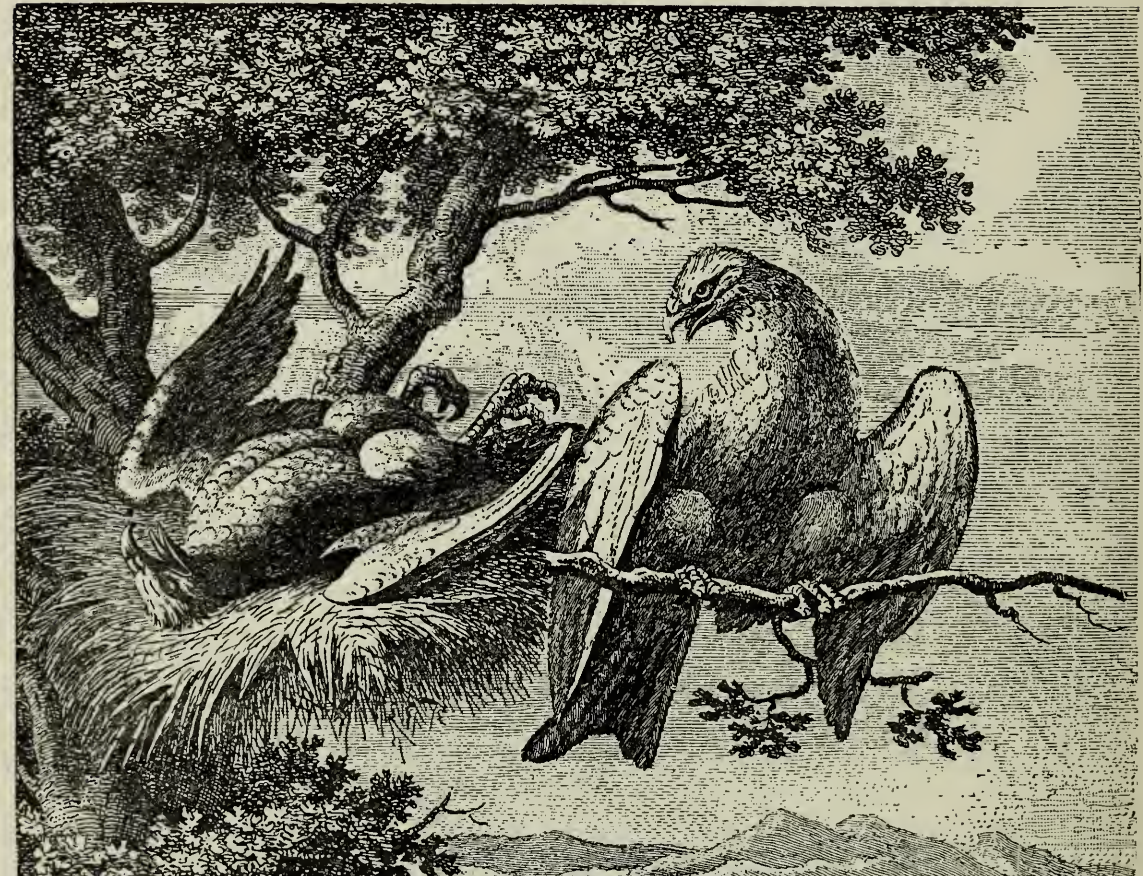
Unstable as water thou shalt not excel.

Though the poor Traveller in the fable was not guilty of any real crime in what he did, yet one cannot help approving the honest simplicity of the Satyr, who could not be reconciled to such double dealing. In the moral sense of the fable, nothing can be more offensive to one of a sincere heart, than he that blows with a different breath from the same mouth; who flatters a man to his face, and reviles him behind his back. Some again, just like this man, to serve a present view, will blow nothing but what is warm, benevolent, and cherishing; and when they have raised the expectations of a dependant to a degree which they think may prove troublesome, can, with putting on a cold air, easily chill and blast all his blooming hopes. But such a temper, whether it proceeds from a designed or natural levity, is detestable, and has been the cause of much trouble and mortification to many a brave, deserving man. Unless the tenor of a man's life be always true and consistent with itself, the less one has to do with him the better.

FABLE LXXV.

THE SICK KITE.

A KITE had been sick a long time, and finding there were no hopes of recovery, begged of his mother to go to all the churches and religious houses in the country to try what prayers and promises would effect in his behalf. The Old Kite replied—"Indeed, dear son, I would willingly undertake anything to save your life, but I have great reason to despair of doing you any service in the way you propose; for, with what face can I ask anything of the gods in favour of one whose whole life has been a continual scene of rapine and



injustice, and who has not scrupled, upon occasion, to rob the very altars themselves?"

The sick man's sacrifice is a lame oblation.

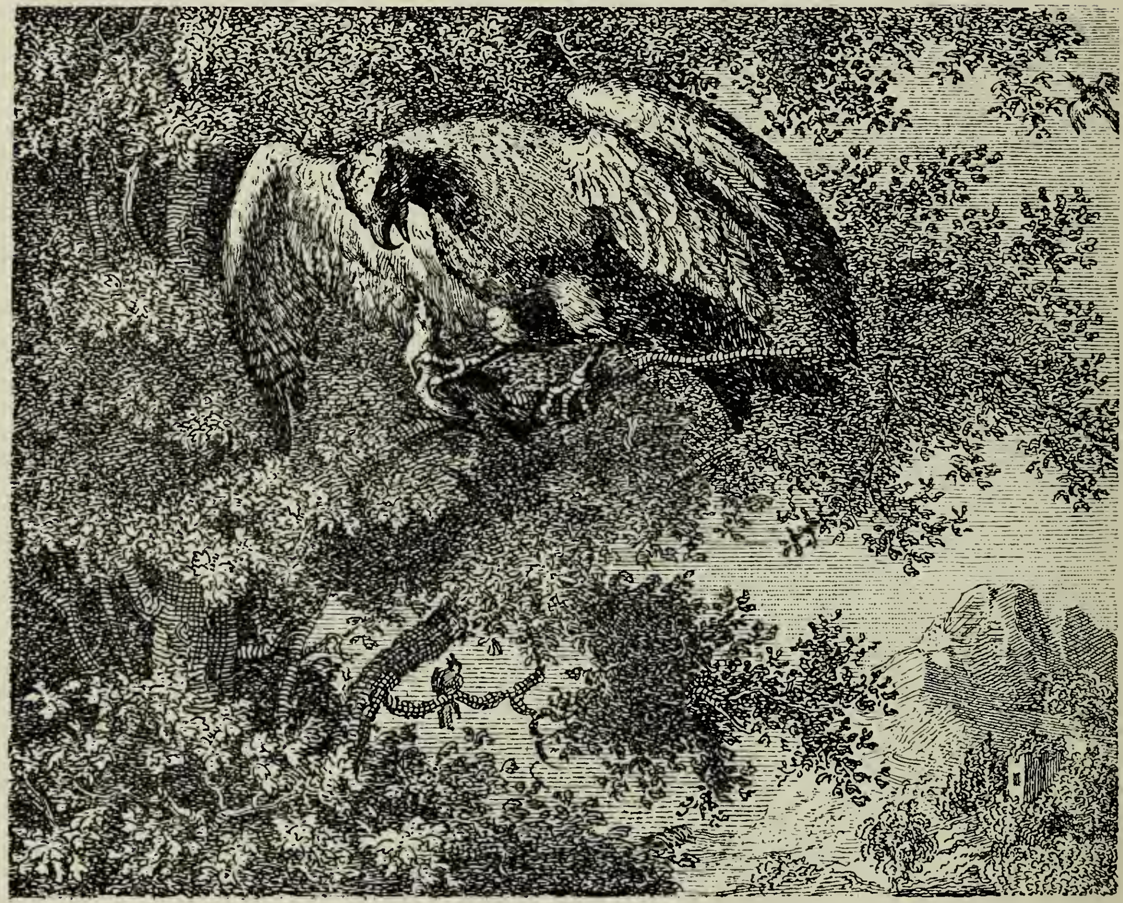
"The ports of death are sins; of life, good deeds;
Through which our merit leads us to our meeds.
How wilful blind is he, then, that would stray,
And hath it in his powers to make his way!
This world death's region is, the other life's;
And here, it should be one of our first strifes,
So to front death, as men might judge us past it:
For good men but see death, the wicked taste it."

BEN JONSON.

FABLE LXXVI.

THE HAWK AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A NIGHTINGALE, sitting all alone among the shady branches of an oak, sung with so melodious and shrill a pipe, that she made the woods echo again, and alarmed a hungry Hawk, who was at some distance off watching for his prey; he had no sooner discovered the little musician, but, making a stoop at the place, he seized her with his crooked talons, and bid her prepare for death.—"Ah!" says she, "for mercy's sake, don't do so barbarous a thing, and so unbecoming yourself; consider, I never did you any wrong, and am but a poor small



morsel for such a stomach as yours; rather attack some larger fowl, which may bring you more credit and a better meal, and let me go."—"Ay!" says the Hawk; "persuade me to it if you can: I have been upon the watch all day long, and have not met with one bit of anything till I caught you; and now you would have me let you go, in hopes of something better, would you? Pray, who would be the fool then?"

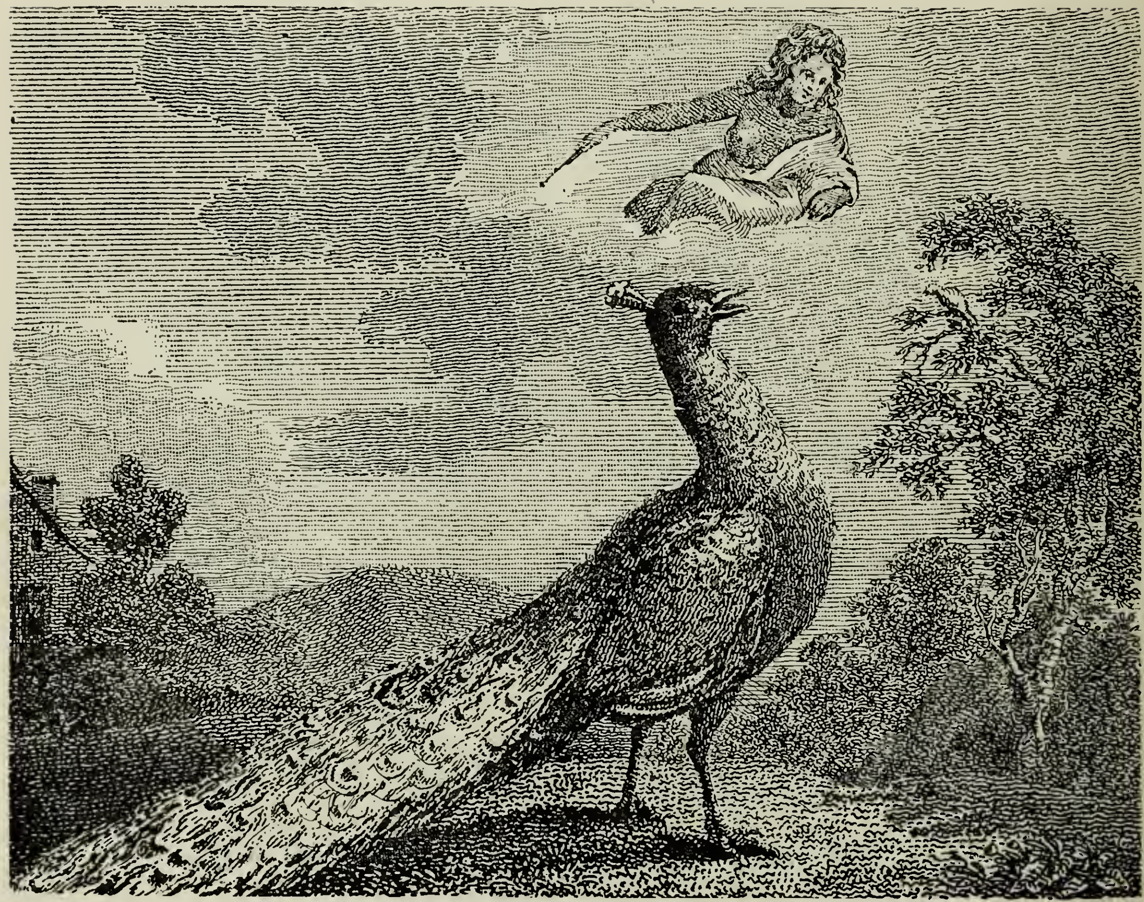
Strike while the iron is hot.

"There were fishermen drawing the river at Chelsea; Mr Bacon came thither by chance in the afternoon, and offered to buy their draught; they were willing. He asked them what they would take? They asked thirty shillings. Mr Bacon offered them ten. They refused it. 'Why, then,' saith Mr Bacon, 'I will be only a looker on.' They drew, and catched nothing. Saith Mr Bacon, 'Are not you mad fellows now, that might have had an angel in your purse, to have made merry withal, and to have warmed you thoroughly, and now you must go home with nothing.' 'Ay, but,' saith the fishermen, 'we had hope then to make a better gain of it.' Saith Mr Bacon, 'Well, my master, then I will tell you, hope is a good breakfast, but it is a bad supper.'"—BACON'S *Apophthegms.*

FABLE LXXVII.

THE PEACOCK'S COMPLAINT.

THE Peacock presented a memorial to Juno, importing how hardly he thought he was used in not having so good a voice as the nightingale; how that pretty animal was agreeable to every ear that heard it, while he was laughed at for his ugly screaming noise, if he did but open his mouth. The goddess, concerned at the uneasiness of her favourite bird, answered him very kindly to this purpose: "If the nightingale is blest with a fine voice, you have the advantage in point of beauty and largeness of person."—"Ah!" says he, "but what avails



my silent unmeaning beauty, when I am so far excelled in voice!" The goddess dismissed him, bidding him consider that the properties of every creature were appointed by the decree of fate: to him beauty; strength to the eagle; to the nightingale a voice of melody; the faculty of speech to the parrot; and to the dove innocence. That each of these was contented with his own peculiar quality; and unless he had a mind to be miserable, he must learn to be so too.

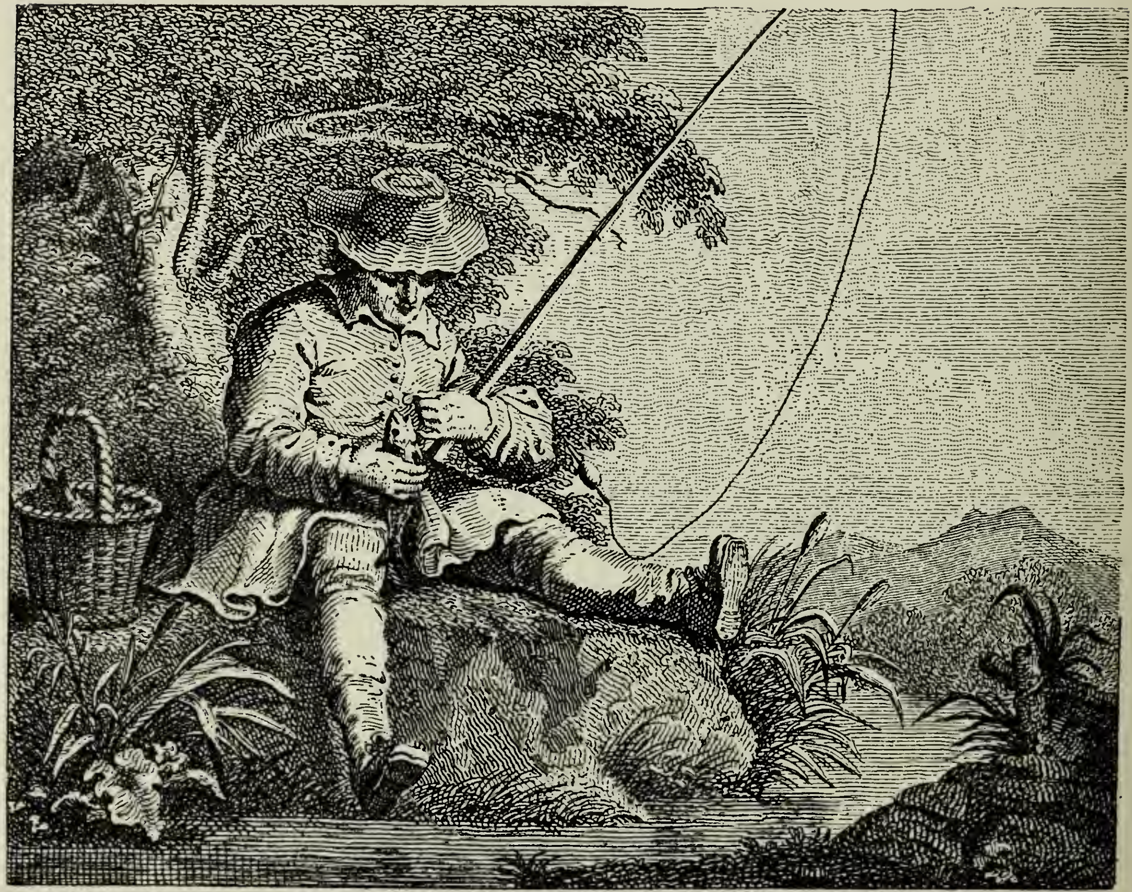
Wisdom is better than rubies.

"If thy vessel be but small in the ocean of this world, if meanness of possessions be thy allotment upon earth, forget not those virtues which the great Disposer of all bids thee to entertain from thy quality and condition; that is, submission, humility, content of mind, and industry,—content may dwell in all stations. To be low, but above contempt, may be high enough to be happy. But many of low degree may be higher than computed, and some cubits above the common commensuration; for in all states virtue gives qualifications and allowances which make out defects. Rough diamonds are sometimes mistaken for pebbles; and meanness may be rich in accomplishments, which riches in vain desire. If our merits be above our stations, if our intrinsical value be greater than what we go for, or our value than our valuation, and if we stand higher in God's than in the censor's book, it may make some equitable balance in the inequalities of this world, and there may be no such vast chasm or gulf between disparities as common meanness determine. The Divine eye looks upon high and low differently from that of man. They who seem to stand upon Olympus, and high mounted unto our eyes, may be both in the valleys and low ground unto His; for He looks upon those as highest who nearest approach His divinity, and upon those as lowest who are farthest from it."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Christian Morals.*

FABLE LXXVIII.

The Angler and the Little Fish.

A Man was angling in a river, and caught a small perch; which, as he was taking off the hook and going to put into his basket, opened its mouth, and began to implore his pity, begging that he would throw it into the river again. Upon the man's demanding what reason he had to expect such a favour,—"Why," says the Fish, "because at present I am but young and little, and consequently not so well worth your while as I shall be if you take me some time hence, when I am grown larger."—"That may be," replies the man, "but I



am not one of those fools who quit a certainty in expectation of an uncertainty."

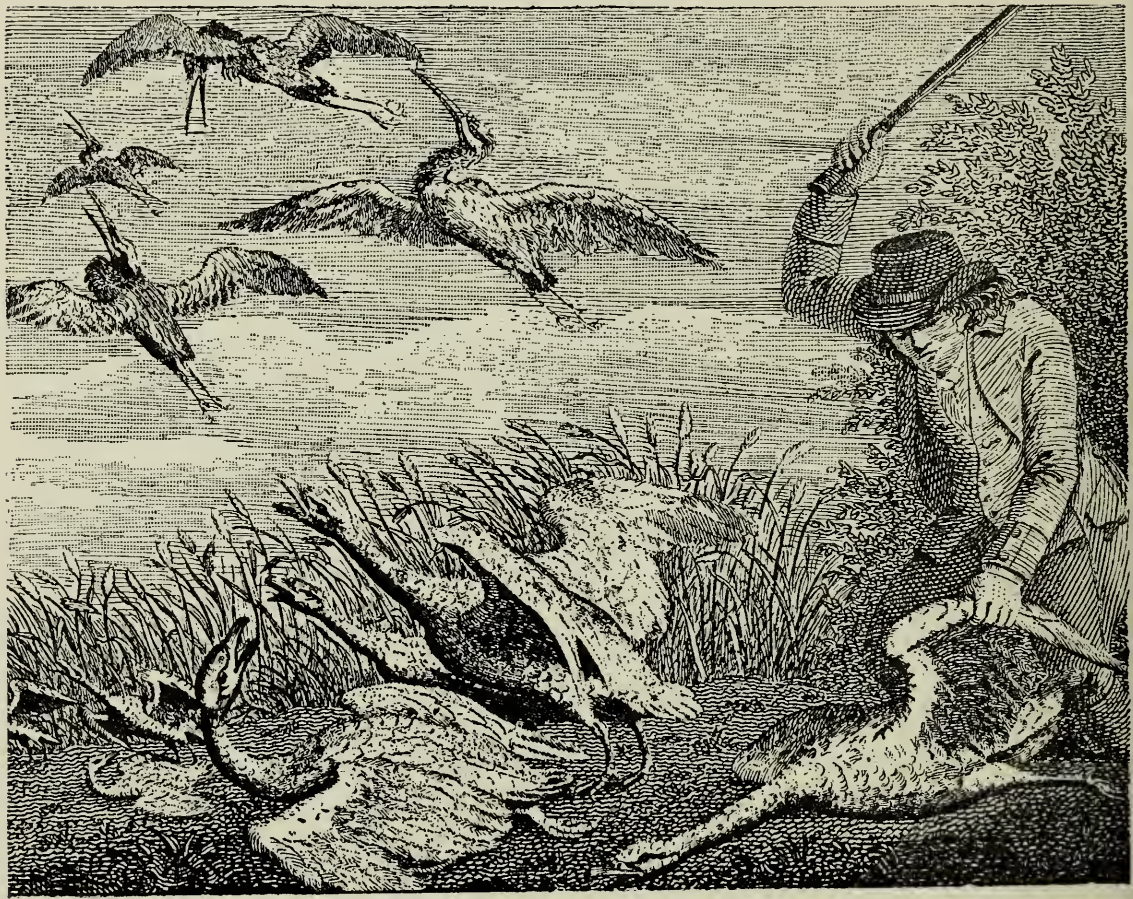
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

This fable points much the same way as the seventy-sixth, so that one moral may very well serve for both. But the lesson they teach is so useful and instructive, that a repetition of it is by no means superfluous. The precept which they would instil into us is, never to let slip the present opportunity, but to secure to ourselves every little advantage, just in the nick that it offers, without a vain reliance upon, and fruitless expectation of, something better in time to come. We may cheer up our spirits with hoping for that which we cannot at present obtain; but at the same time let us be sure we give no occasion of condemning ourselves for omitting anything which it was in our power to secure.

FABLE LXXIX.

THE GEESE AND THE CRANES.

A FLOCK of Geese and a parcel of Cranes used often to feed together in a corn-field. At last the owner of the corn, with his servants, coming upon them of a sudden, surprised them in the very act; and the Geese, being heavy, fat, full-bodied creatures, were most of them sufferers; but the Cranes, being thin and light, easily flew away.



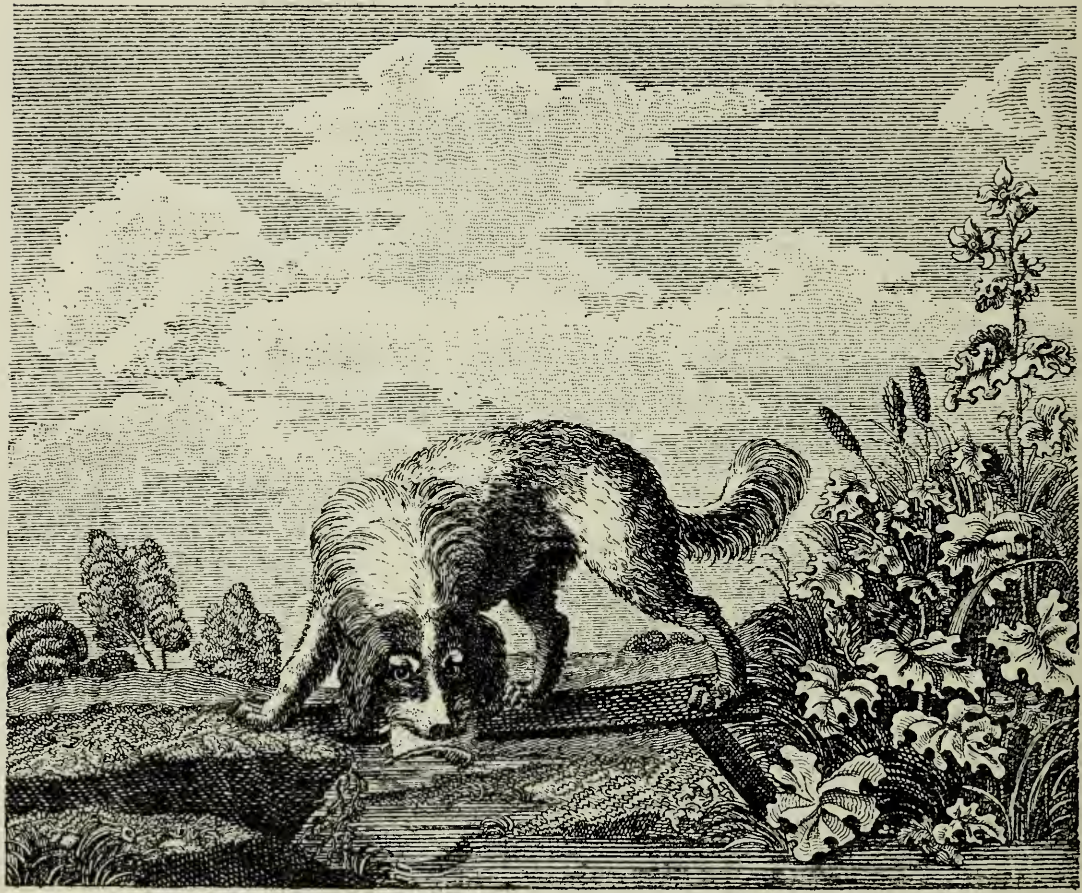
Riches are the baggage of virtue; they cannot be spared nor left behind, but they hinder the march.

When the enemy comes to make a seizure, they are sure to suffer most whose circumstances are the richest and fattest. In any case of persecution money hangs like a dead weight about a man; and we never feel gold so heavy as when we endeavour to make off with it. Therefore wise and politic ministers of State, whenever they see a storm begin to gather over their heads, always take care to unlade themselves of a good part of their cargo; and, by this means, seldom find but the blasts of obloquy, through which they are to make their way, are less deaf and inexorable than the stormy waves of the ocean. Indeed, poverty is too frequently the occasion of men's being treated as if they were guilty of the greatest crimes and reproaches; but then these sort of criminals have this advantage, that no one thinks fit to treat them with anything worse than contempt; whereas if any pretence can be found to fall upon the man who is rich, it is a miracle if he escapes with both life and money. In short, riches are like the baggage of an army: very useful while we lie in quiet possession of the camp, or are powerful enough to defy the enemy; but when once we are put to the rout, if we would get off with our lives or liberties, we must quit our baggage as soon as possible, and leave it for plunder to our pursuers. Nay, however strongly intrenched we may think ourselves, as long as money is in the case, it is good to look about us for fear of a surprise; for, after all, he that does not, upon occasion, make himself wings with his riches to fly off with, deserves to be punished, like a Goose as he is, for his heaviness.

FABLE LXXX.

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW.

A DOG, crossing a little rivulet with a piece of flesh in his mouth, saw his own shadow represented in the clear mirror of the limpid stream; and believing it to be another dog, who was carrying another piece of flesh, he could not forbear catching at it; but was so far from getting anything by his greedy design, that he dropped the piece he had in his mouth, which immediately sunk to the botton, and was irrecoverably lost.



Grasp at the shadow and lose the substance.

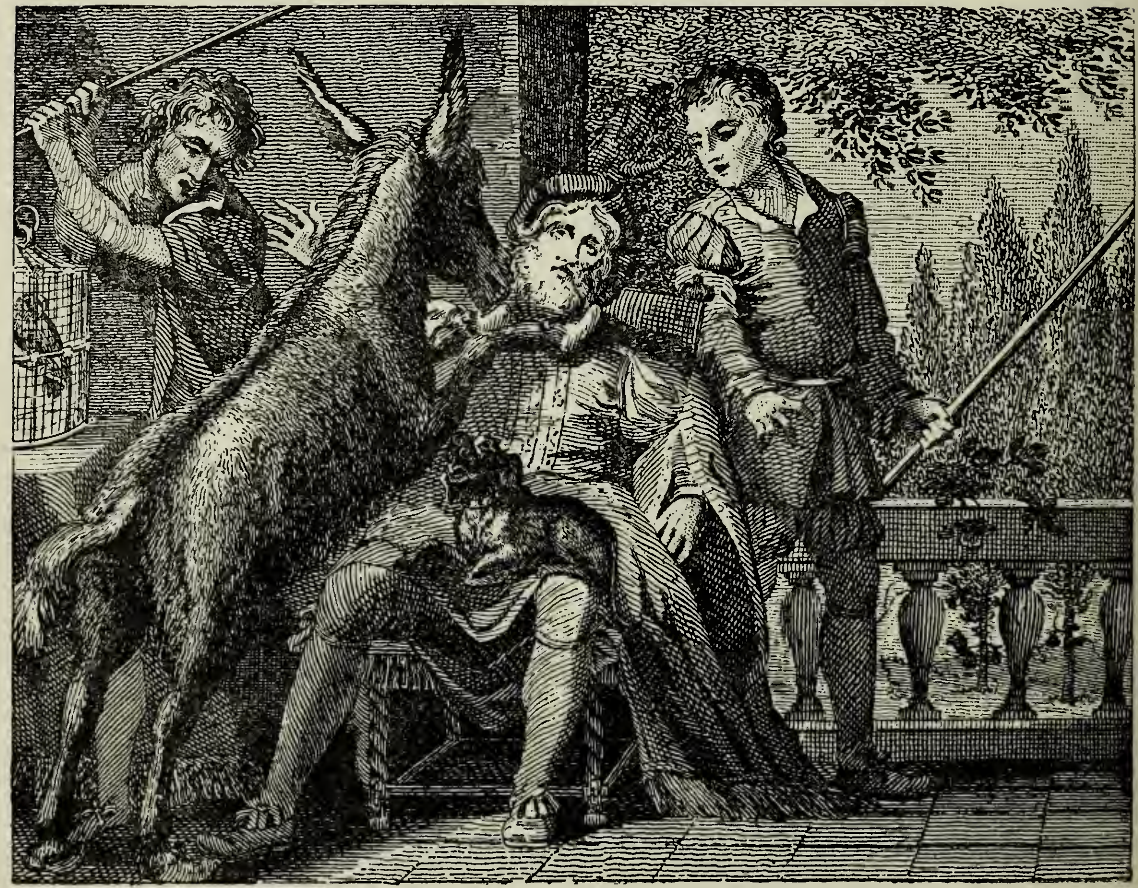
He that catches at more than belongs to him, justly deserves to lose what he has. Yet nothing is more common, and, at the same time, more pernicious, than this selfish principle. It prevails from the king to the peasant; and all orders and degrees of men are, more or less, infected with it. Great monarchs have been drawn in, by this greedy humour, to grasp at the dominions of their neighbours; not that they wanted anything more to feed their luxury, but to gratify their insatiable appetite for vainglory. If the kings of Persia could have been contented with their own vast territories, they had not lost all Asia for the sake of a little petty State of Greece. And France, with all its glory, has, ere now, been reduced to the last extremity by the same unjust encroachments.

He that thinks he sees another's estate in a pack of cards, or a box and dice, and ventures his own in the pursuit of it, should not repine if he finds himself a beggar in the end.

FABLE LXXXI.

THE ASS AND THE LITTLE DOG.

THE Ass, observing how great a favourite the little Dog was with his master, how much caressed and fondled, and fed with good bits at every meal,—and for no other reason, as he could perceive, but skipping and frisking about, wagging his tail, and leaping up into his master's lap,—he was resolved to imitate the same, and see whether such a behaviour would not procure him the same favours. Accordingly, the master was no sooner come home from walking about his fields and gardens, and was seated in his easy-chair, but the Ass, who



observed him, came gambolling and braying towards him, in a very awkward manner. The master could not help laughing aloud at the odd sight. But his jest was soon turned into earnest when he felt the rough salute of the Ass's forefeet, who, raising himself upon his hinder legs, pawed against his breast with a most loving air, and would fain have jumped into his lap. The good man, terrified at this outrageous behaviour, and unable to endure the weight of so heavy a beast, cried out; upon which, one of his servants running in with a good stick, and laying on heartily upon the bones of the poor Ass, soon convinced him that every one who desires it is not qualified to be a favourite.

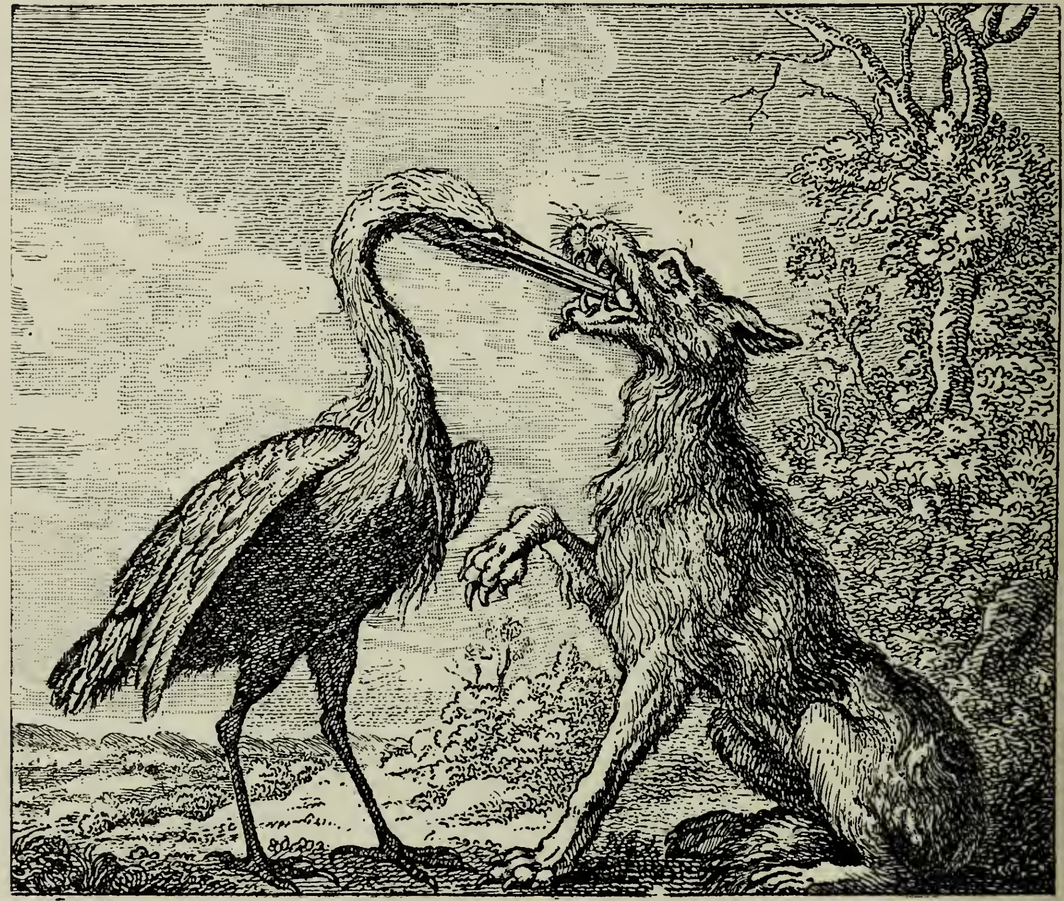
One man may better steal a horse than another look over the hedge.

Some men are as engaging in their way as little dogs. They can fawn, wheedle, cringe, or, if occasion requires, leap backward and forward over a stick, to the great emolument of their master, and entertainment of those that behold them. But these are qualifications to which everybody cannot pretend; and therefore none but those who have a genius for it should aspire at the employment. Many a man envies the happiness of these favourites, and would fain insinuate himself into the same good graces, if he did but know the way; but whoever has a tolerable share of discretion, will distrust his abilities in this respect, and modestly forbear the attempt, for fear he should miscarry, and look like an Ass. But, in short, the true moral of this fable is, that everyone should consider the just turn and temper of his parts, and weigh the talents by which he hopes to be distinguished. After such an examination, he may the more certainly know how to apply them to the most proper purposes; at least, so as not to hurt or even mortify himself, by any mistaken address. Since there is such a variety of tempers in the world, and a no less multiplicity of arts and studies to fit and tally with them, how reasonable is it in general, how much would it be for the true interest of everyone in particular, if men would but be directed, by the natural bent of their genius, to such pursuits as are most agreeable to their capacities, and to the rudiments of education which they have most strongly imbibed.

FABLE LXXXII.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

A WOLF, after devouring his prey, happened to have a bone stick in his throat, which gave him so much pain, that he went howling up and down, and importuning every creature he met to lend him a kind hand in order to his relief; nay, he promised a reasonable reward to anyone that should undertake the operation with success. At last the Crane, tempted with the lucre of the reward, and having first procured him to confirm his promise with an oath, undertook the business, and ventured his long neck into the rapacious felon's throat. In



short, he plucked out the bone, and expected the promised gratuity. When the Wolf, turning his eyes disdainfully towards him, said,—"I did not think you had been so unconscionable; I had your head in my mouth, and could have bit it off whenever I pleased, but suffered you to take it away without any damage, and yet you are not contented."

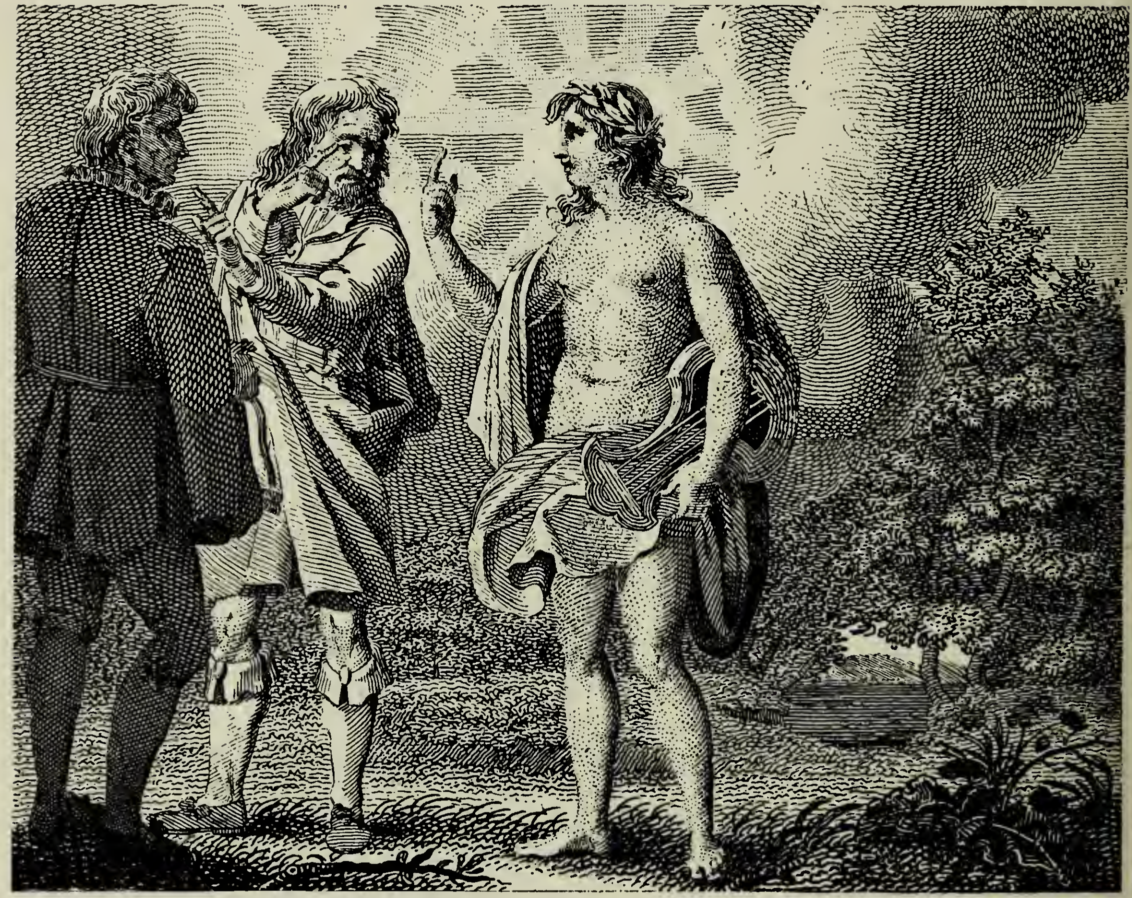
Fools stand in slippery places.

"The palace of the King of Spain was once on fire; a soldier, who knew the King's sister was in her apartment, and must inevitably have been consumed in a few moments by the flames, at the risk of his life rushed in and brought her Highness safe out in his arms; but the Spanish *etiquette* was here wofully broken into! The loyal soldier was brought to trial, and as it was impossible to deny that he had entered her apartment the judges condemned him to die! The Spanish Princess, however, condescended, in consideration of the circumstances, to *pardon* the soldier, and very benevolently saved his life."—ISAAC D'ISRAELI.

FABLE LXXXIII.

THE ENVIOUS MAN AND THE COVETOUS.

AN Envious Man happened to be offering up his prayers to Jupiter, just in the time and place with a covetous, miserable fellow. Jupiter, not caring to be troubled with their impertinences himself, sent Apollo to examine the merits of their petitions, and to give them such relief as he should think proper. Apollo therefore opened his commission, and withal told them that, to make short of the matter, whatever the one asked, the other should have it double. Upon this, the Covetous Man, though he had a thousand things to request,



yet forbore to ask first, hoping to receive a double quantity; for he concluded that all men's wishes sympathised with his. By this means, the Envious Man had an opportunity of preferring his petition first, which was the thing he aimed at; so, without much hesitation, he prayed to be relieved, by having one of his eyes put out: knowing that, of consequence, his companion would be deprived of both.

Let age, not envy, draw wrinkles on thy cheeks.

"So a wild Tartar, when he spies
A man that's valiant, handsome, wise,
If he can kill him, thinks to inherit
His wit, his beauty, and his spirit;
As if just so much he enjoyed
As in another is destroyed."

SAMUEL BUTLER: *Hudibras.*

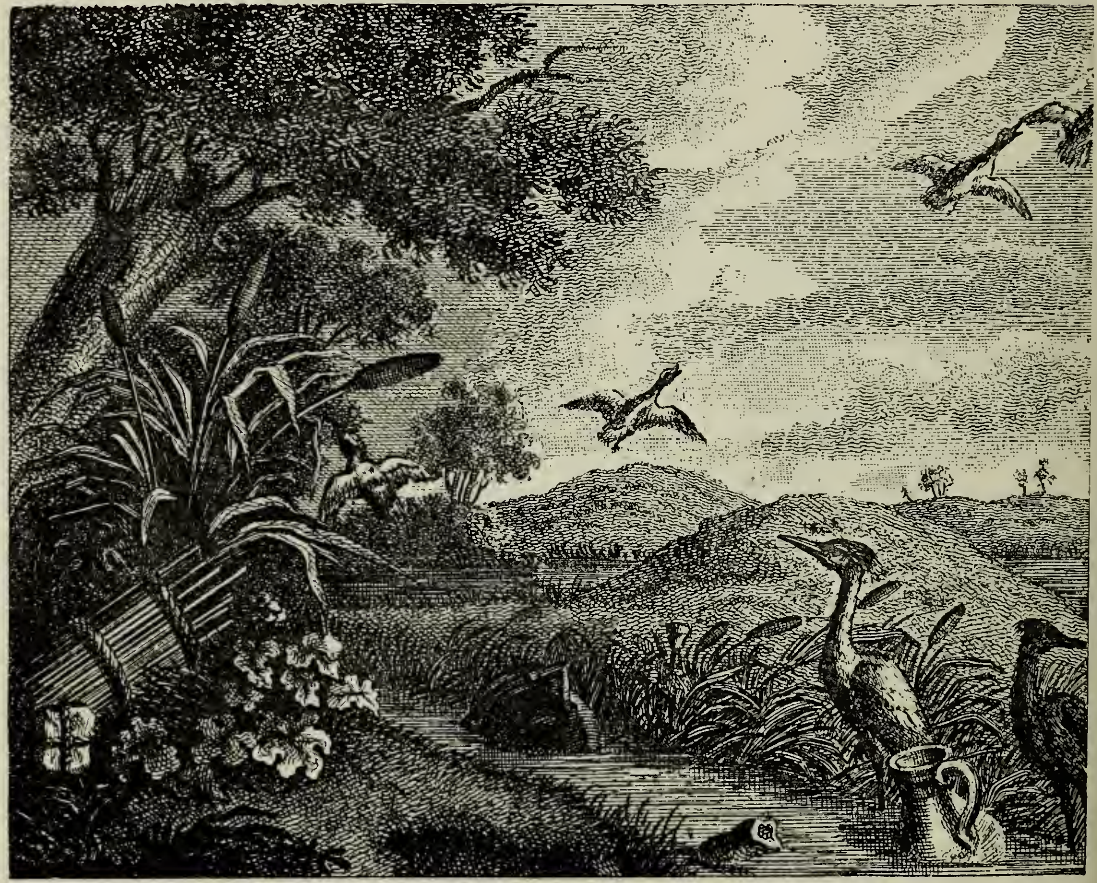
"Foul jealousy! thou turnest love divine
To joyless dread, and mak'st the loving heart
With hateful thoughts to languish and to pine;
And feed itself with self-consuming smart,
Of all the passions of the mind, thou vilest art!"

SPENSER: *Fairie Queen.*

FABLE LXXXIV.

THE TWO POTS.

AN Earthen Pot, and one of Brass, standing together upon the river's brink, were both carried away by the flowing in of the tide. The Earthen Pot shewed some uneasiness, as fearing he should be broken; but his companion of Brass bid him be under no apprehensions, for that he would take care of him.—"O," replies the other, "keep as far off as ever you can, I entreat you; it is you I am most afraid of; for, whether the stream dashes you against me, or me against you, I am sure to be the sufferer; and therefore, I beg of you, do not let us come near one another."



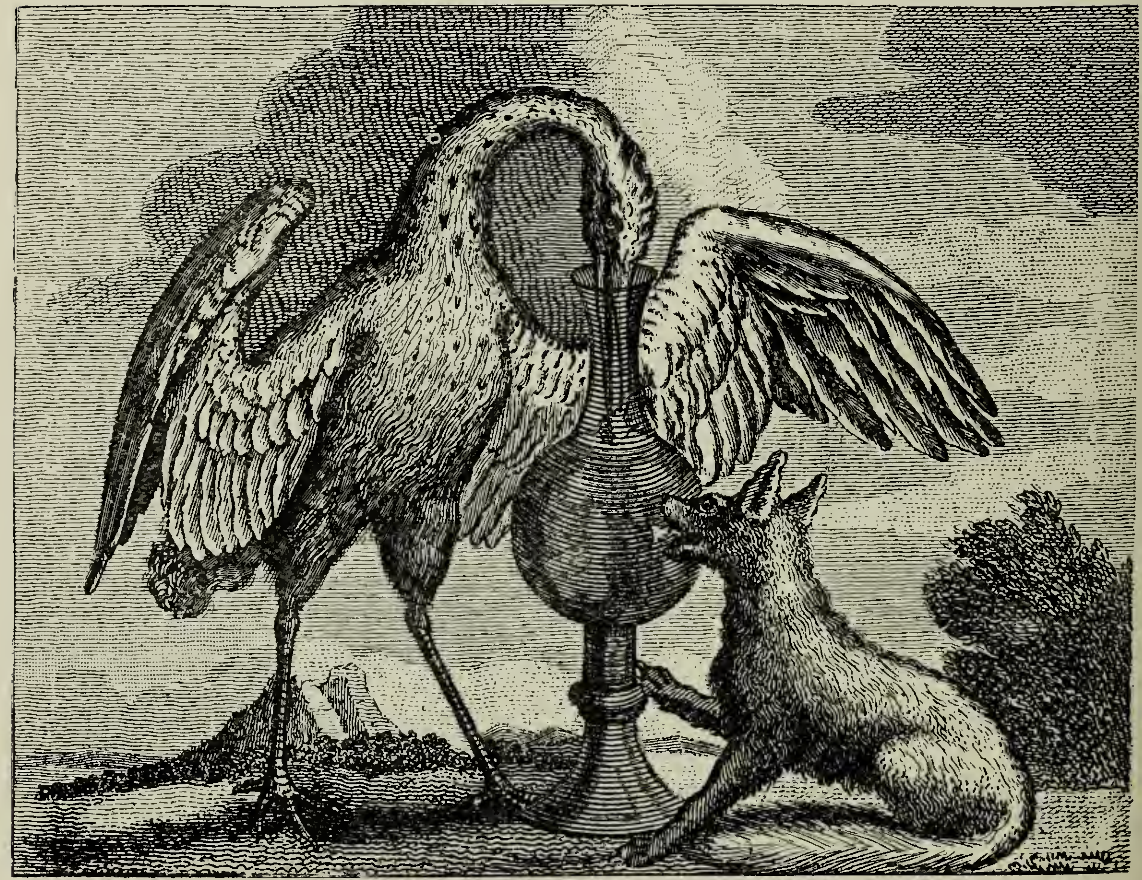
Defend me from my friends.

A man of a moderate fortune, who is contented with what he has, and finds he can live happily upon it, should take care not to hazard and expose his felicity by consorting with the great and the powerful. People of equal conditions may float down the current of life without hurting each other; but it is a point of some difficulty to steer one's course in the company of the great, so as to escape without a bulge. One would not choose to have one's little country-box situated in the neighbourhood of a very great man; for whether I ignorantly trespass upon him, or he knowingly encroaches upon me, I only am like to be the sufferer. I can neither entertain nor play with him upon his own terms; for that which is moderation and diversion to him, in me would be extravagance and ruin.

FABLE LXXXV.

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

THE Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and, being disposed to divert himself at the expense of his guest, provided nothing for the entertainment but a soup, in a wide shallow dish.



This himself could lap up with a great deal of ease; but the Stork, who could but just dip in the point of his bill, was not a bit the better all the while. However, in a few days after, he returned the compliment, and invited the Fox; but suffered nothing to be brought to table but some minced meat in a glass jar, the neck of which was so deep and so narrow that, though the Stork with his long bill made a shift to fill his belly, all that the Fox, who was very hungry, could do, was to lick the brims, as the Stork slabbered them with his eating. Reynard was heartily vexed at first; but when he came to take his leave, owned ingenuously that he had been used as he deserved, and that he had no reason to take any treatment ill of which himself had set the example.

Do as you would be done by.

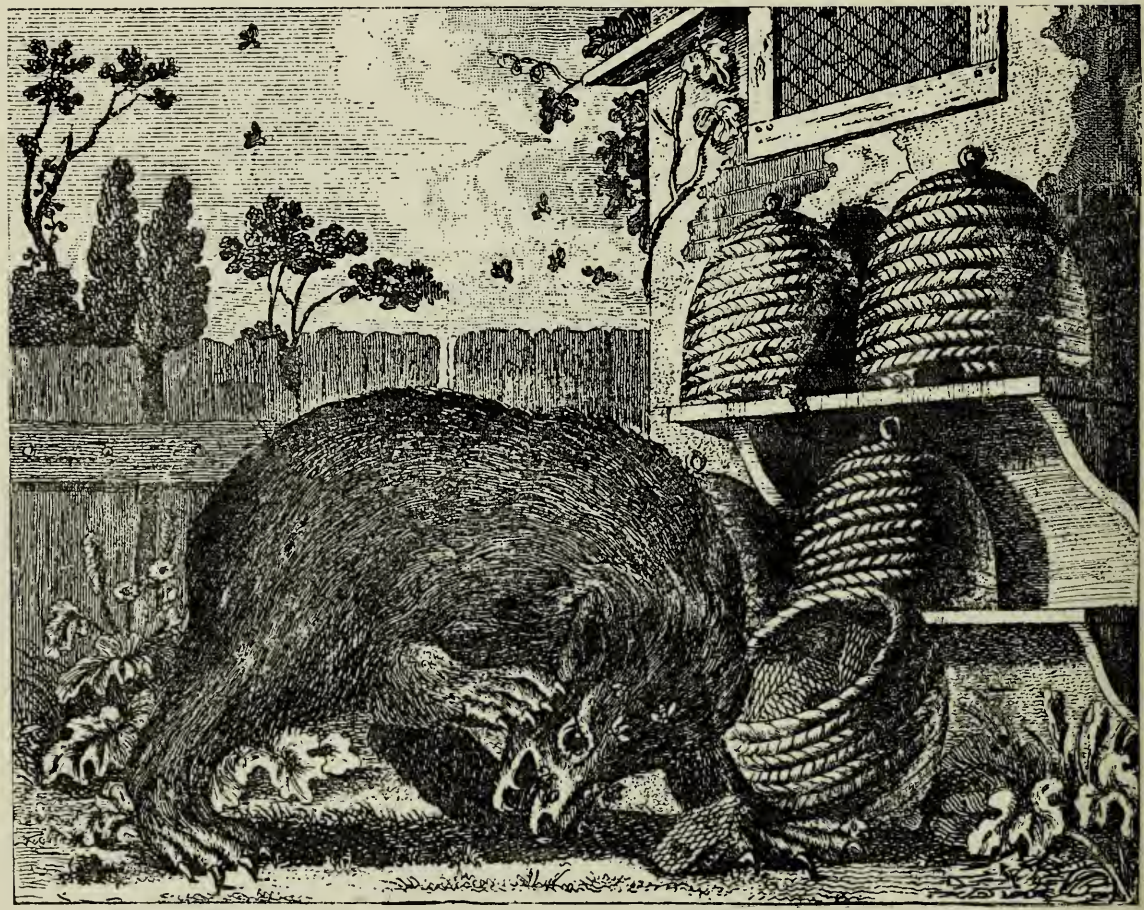
"Æsop has here given us the fiction of a case wherein it may not be amiss to repay an abuse in its own kind. The mockery of the Fox was a reproach, as it hit the Stork on the weak side; but that which was rudeness and ill nature in the aggressor was only a monitory justice and a discreet sharpness in the other. But this is the fate commonly of drolls and buffoons, that while they think to make sport with others, they serve only in the conclusion for a laughing-stock themselves.

"There's nothing looks sillier than a crafty knave outwitted and beaten at his own play. The Fox's frolic went too far, in regard it was both upon an invitation and under his own roof. Now the return of the Stork was only *quid pro quo* and a warrantable revenge, even according to the rules of civility and good fellowship; for the Fox's leading the humour, gave the other not only a provocation but a kind of right to requite him in his own way, besides that it was the cleverer mockery of the two. This may serve to reprove those liberties in conversation that pass the bounds of good nature, honesty, and respect. When they exceed these limits, they degenerate in scurrility, scandal, and ill manners. For, in all cases, an eye must be had to the due circumstances of measure, time, place, occasion, and person. The laws of humanity and hospitality must be kept sacred upon any terms; for the wounding of a friend for the sake of jest is an intemperance and an immorality not to be endured. There was somewhat of this in the Fox's beginning of the frolic."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE LXXXVI.

The Bear and the Bee Hives.

A Bear, climbing over the fence into a place where Bees were kept, began to plunder the Hives, and rob them of their honey. But the Bees, to revenge the injury, attacked him in a whole swarm together; and though they were not able to pierce his rugged hide, yet, with their little stings, they so annoyed his eyes and nostrils that, unable to endure the smarting pain, with impatience he tore the skin over his ears with his own claws, and suffered ample punishment for the injury he did the Bees in breaking open their waxen cells.



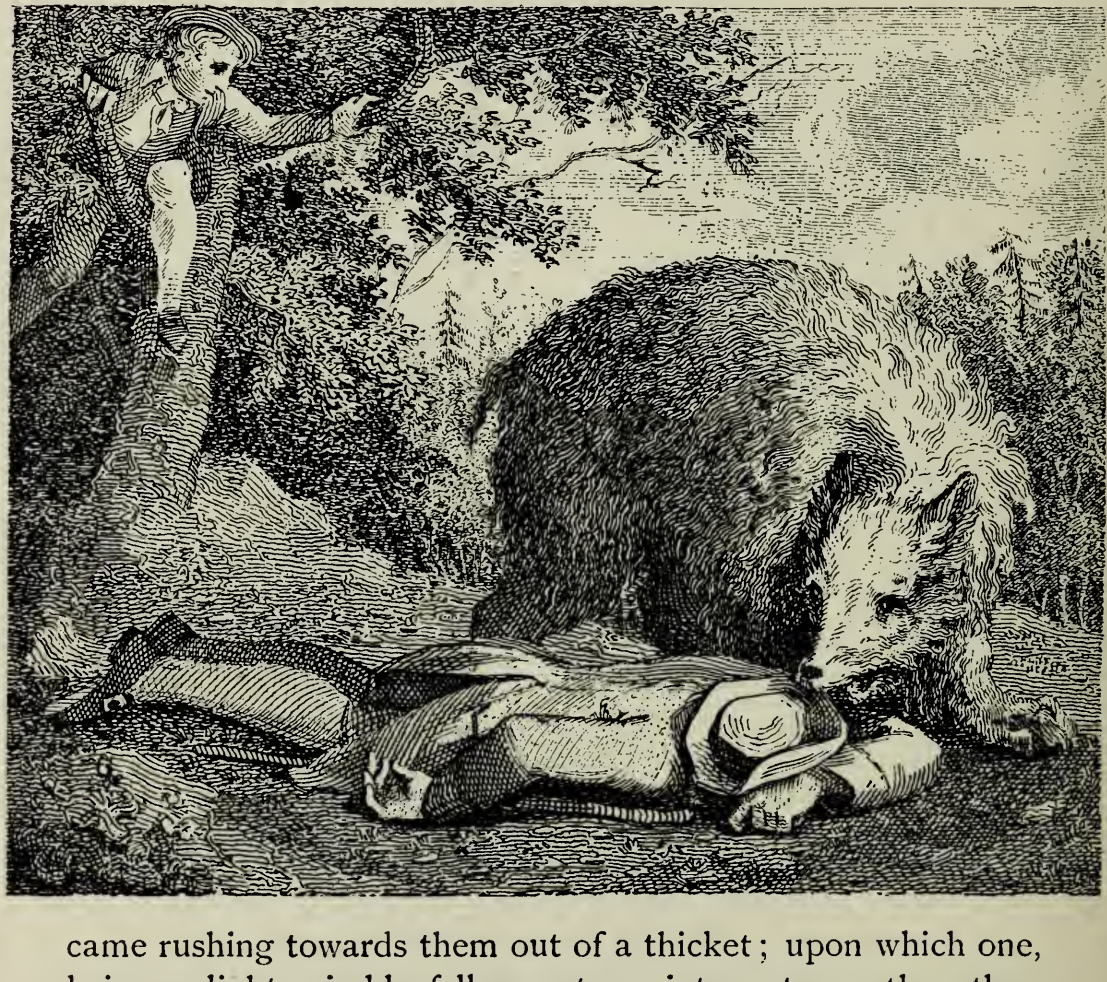
And many strokes, though with a little axe,
Hew down and fell the hardest timber'd oak.

Many and great are the injuries of which some men are guilty towards others, for the sake of gratifying some liquorish appetite. For there are those who would not stick to bring desolation upon their country, and run the hazard of their own necks into the bargain, rather than balk a wicked inclination, either of cruelty, ambition, or avarice. But it were to be wished all who are hurried by such blind impulses would consider a moment before they proceed to irrevocable execution. Injuries and wrongs not only call for revenge and reparation with the voice of equity itself, but oftentimes carry their punishment along with them, and, by an unforeseen train of events, are retorted at the head of the actor of them; and not seldom, from a deep remorse, expiated upon himself by his own hand.

FABLE LXXXVII.

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR.

TWO men being to travel through a forest together, mutually promised to stand by each other in any danger they should meet upon the way. They had not gone far before a Bear came rushing towards them out of a thicket; upon which one, being a light, nimble fellow, got up into a tree; the other, falling flat upon his face, and holding his breath, lay still, while the Bear came up and smelled at him; but that creature, supposing him to be a dead carcass, went back again into the wood, without doing him the least harm. When all was over,



the Spark who had climbed the tree came down to his companion, and, with a pleasant smile, asked him what the Bear said to him—" For," says he, " I took notice that he clapt his mouth very close to your ear."—" Why," replies the other, " he charged me to take care for the future not to put any confidence in such cowardly rascals as you are."

Call you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing.

" Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade."

Hamlet.

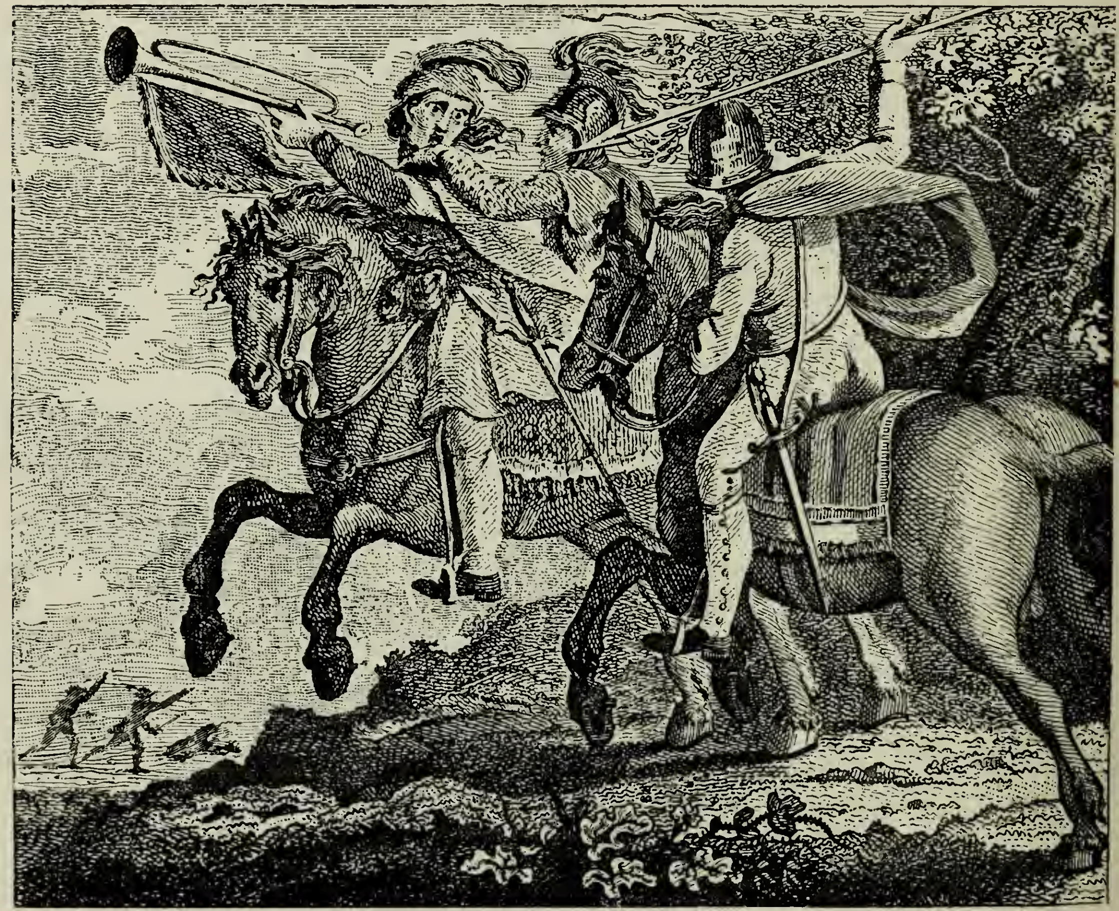
" Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels
Be sure you be not loose; for those you make friends
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
Like water from ye, never found again
But where they mean to sink ye."

King Henry VIII.

FABLE LXXXVIII.

THE TRUMPETER TAKEN PRISONER.

A TRUMPETER, being taken prisoner in a battle, begged hard for quarter, declaring his innocence, and protesting that he neither had nor could kill any man, bearing no arms, but only his trumpet, which he was obliged to sound at the word of command.—"For that reason," replied his enemies, "we are determined not to spare you; for though you yourself never fight, yet with that wicked instrument of yours you blow up animosity between other people, and so become the occasion of much bloodshed."



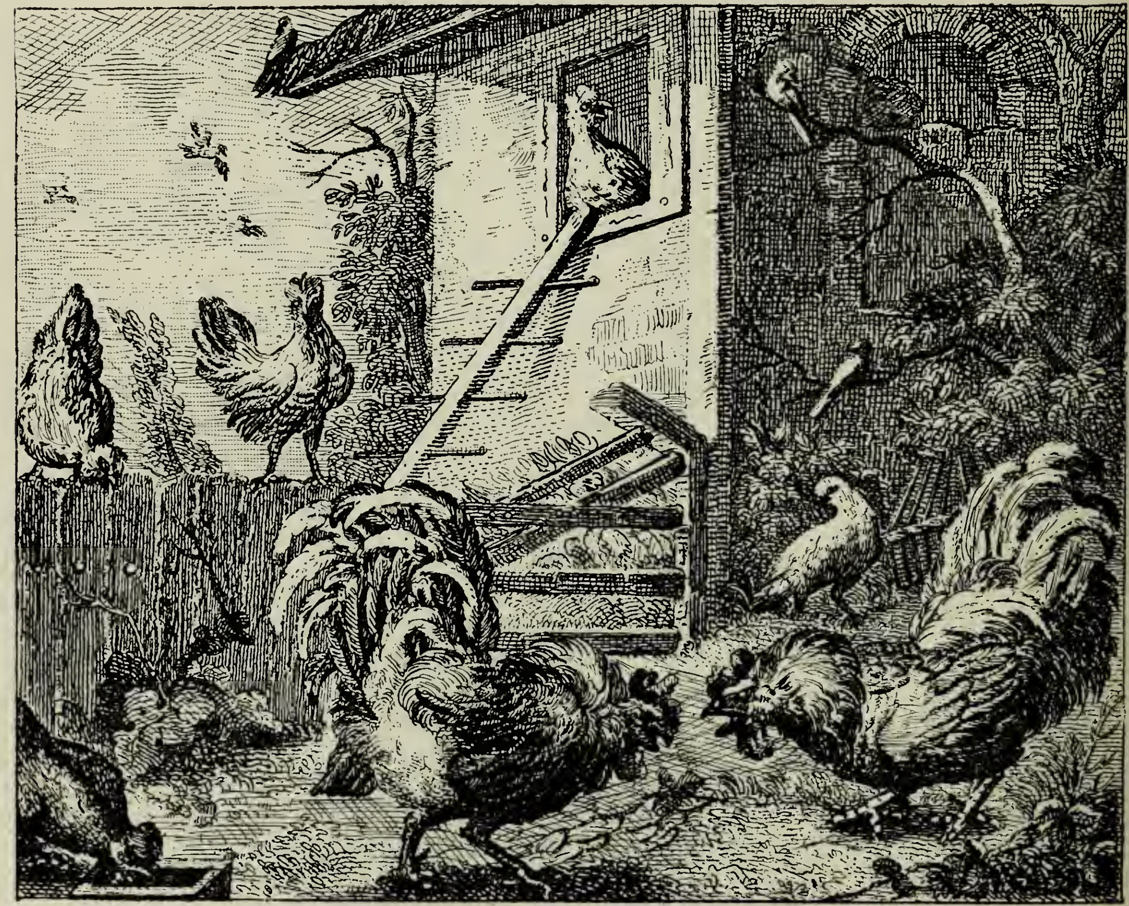
Those who in quarrels interpose
Must often wipe a bloody nose.

A man may be guilty of murder who has never handled a sword, or pulled a trigger, or lifted up his arm with any mischievous weapon. There is a little incendiary called the tongue, which is more venomous than a poisoned arrow, and more killing than a two-edged sword. The moral of the fable therefore is this, that if in any civil insurrection the persons taken in arms against the government deserve to die, much more do they whose devilish tongues gave birth to the sedition, and excited the tumult. When wicked priests, instead of preaching peace and charity, employ that engine of scandal, their tongue, to foment rebellions, whether they succeed in their designs or no, they ought to be severely punished; for they have done what in them lay to set folks together by the ears; they have blown the trumpet and sounded the alarm, and if thousands are not destroyed by the sword it is none of their fault.

FABLE LXXXIX.

THE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCKS.

A CERTAIN man, having taken a Partridge, plucked some of the feathers out of its wings, and turned it into a little yard, where he kept game-cocks. The Cocks, for a while, made the poor bird lead a sad life, continually pecking and driving it away from the meat. This treatment was taken the more unkindly, because offered to a stranger; and the Partridge could not but conclude them the most inhospitable, uncivil people he had ever met with. But at last, observing how frequently they quarrelled and fought with each other, he



comforted himself with this reflection: that it was no wonder they were so cruel to him, since there was so much bickering and animosity among themselves.

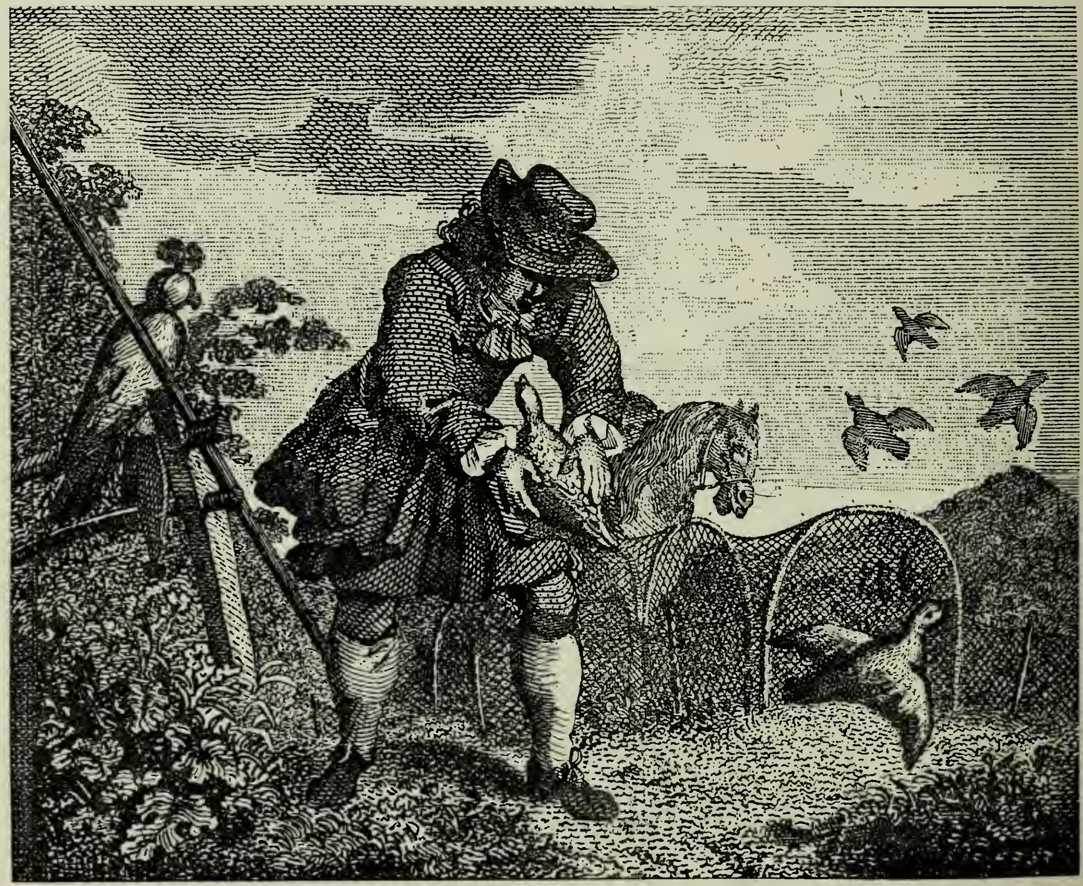
A man's nature is subdued to what it works in.

"Practices and dispositions are generally of a piece; such usage from such sort of men is in a manner necessary. To be surprised at it, is in effect to wonder that the fig-tree yields juice. Pray consider that both you and your enemy are dropping off, and that ere long your very memories will be extinguished."—MARCUS AURELIUS.

FABLE XC.

THE FALCONER AND THE PARTRIDGE.

A FALCONER having taken a Partridge in his nets, the bird begged hard for a reprieve, and promised the man, if he would let him go, to decoy other Partridges into his net.—"No," replies the Falconer; "I was before determined not to spare you, but now you have condemned yourself by your own words; for he who is such a scoundrel as to offer to betray his friends to save himself, deserves, if possible, worse than death."



There should be honour even among thieves.

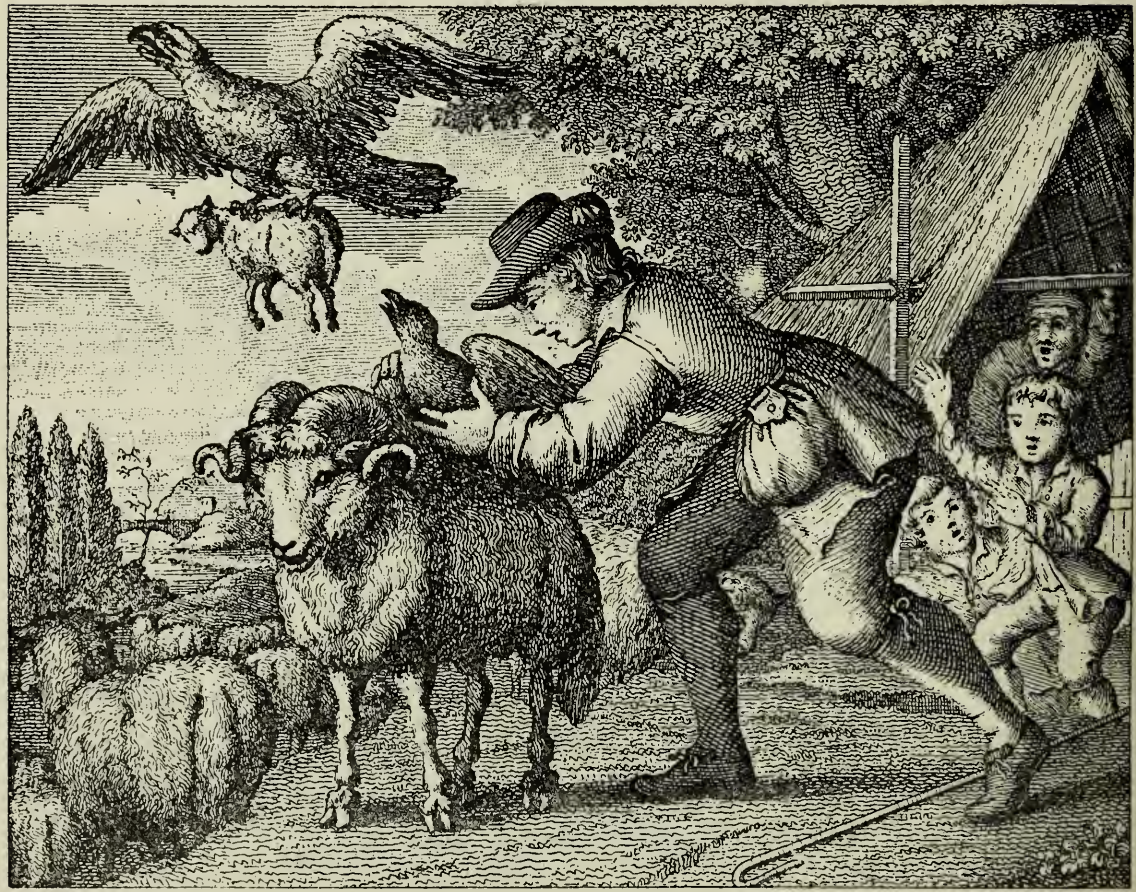
"Say what is Honour?—'Tis the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust—
A foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil:
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill."

WORDSWORTH.

FABLE XCI.

THE EAGLE AND THE CROW.

AN Eagle flew down from the top of a high rock, and settled upon the back of a lamb; and then instantly flying up into the air again, bore his bleeting prize aloft in his pounces. A Crow who sat upon an elm, and beheld this exploit, resolved to imitate it; so flying down upon the back of a ram, and entangling his claws in the wool, he fell a-chattering and attempting to fly; by which means he drew the observation of the shepherd upon him, who finding his feet hampered in the fleece of the ram, easily took him, and gave him to his boys for their sport and diversion.



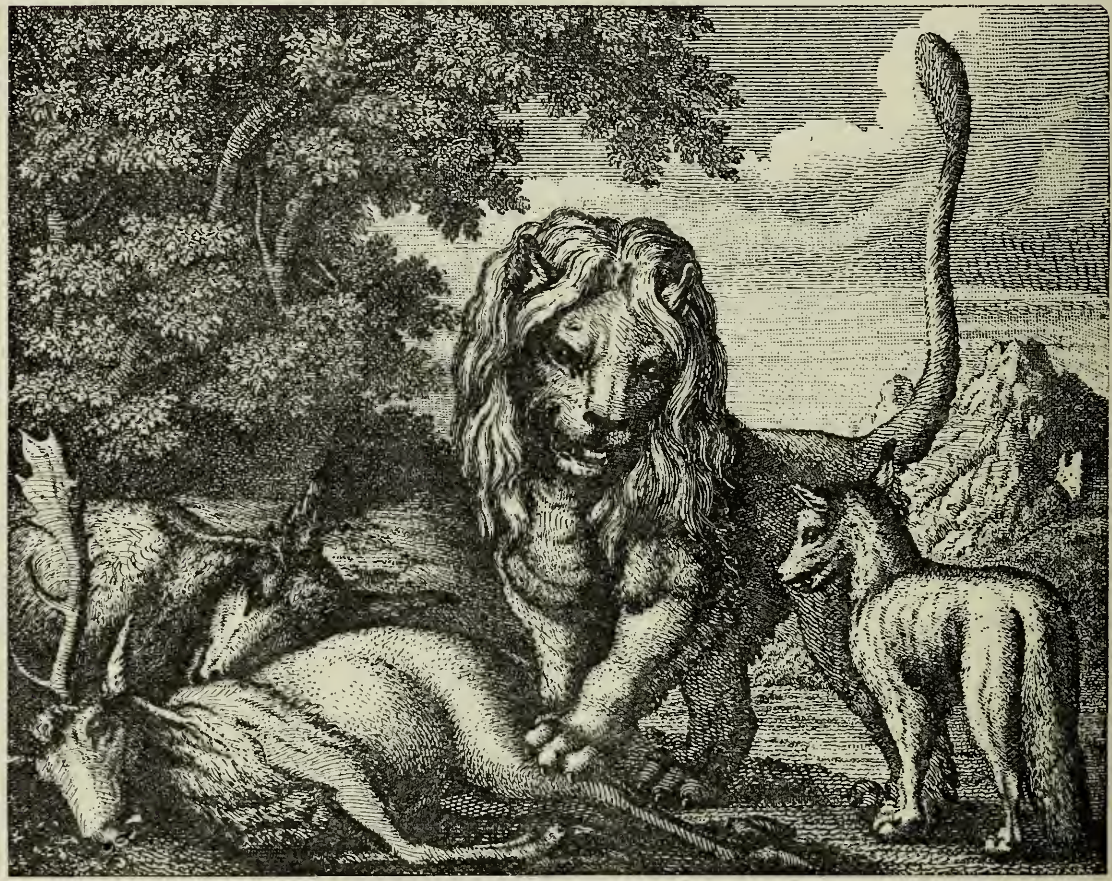
Vessels large may venture more,
But little boats should keep near shore.

Every quality which is excellent and commendable is not, however, always a proper object for our imitation. We ought to state our own account honestly and fairly, that we may see what our abilities are, and how our circumstances stand; otherwise, we may not only become ridiculous to others, but prejudicial to ourselves, by some awkward and ill-judged emulation, though it happen to be in a qualification truly laudable and great. It behoves every man to exert a good share of industry towards the advancement of his interest, or, if he pleases, of his reputation. But then it is highly necessary that he does this with a true regard to his own capacity, and without any danger of exposing or embarrassing himself in the operation.

FABLE XCII.

THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX.

THE Lion, the Ass, and the Fox went a-hunting together in the forest; and it was agreed, that whatever was taken should be divided amongst them. They happened to have very good sport, and caught a large fat stag, which the Lion ordered the Ass to divide. The Ass, according to the best of his capacity, did so, and made three pretty equal shares. But such levelling doings not suiting at all with the craving temper of the greedy Lion, without further delay he flew upon the Ass and tore him in pieces; and then bid the Fox divide



it into two parts. Reynard, who seldom wanted a prompter, however, had his cue given him sufficiently upon this occasion; and so, nibbling off one little bit for himself, he laid forth all the rest for the Lion's portion. The royal brute was so delighted at this dutiful and handsome proof of his respect, that he could not forbear expressing the satisfaction it gave him; and asked him, withal, where he could possibly have learnt so proper and so courtly a behaviour.—"Why," replies Reynard, "to tell your majesty the truth, I was taught it by the Ass that lies dead there."

Bought wit is best.

Princes, says Gracian, are willing to be *aided*, but not *surpassed*, which maxim is thus illustrated.

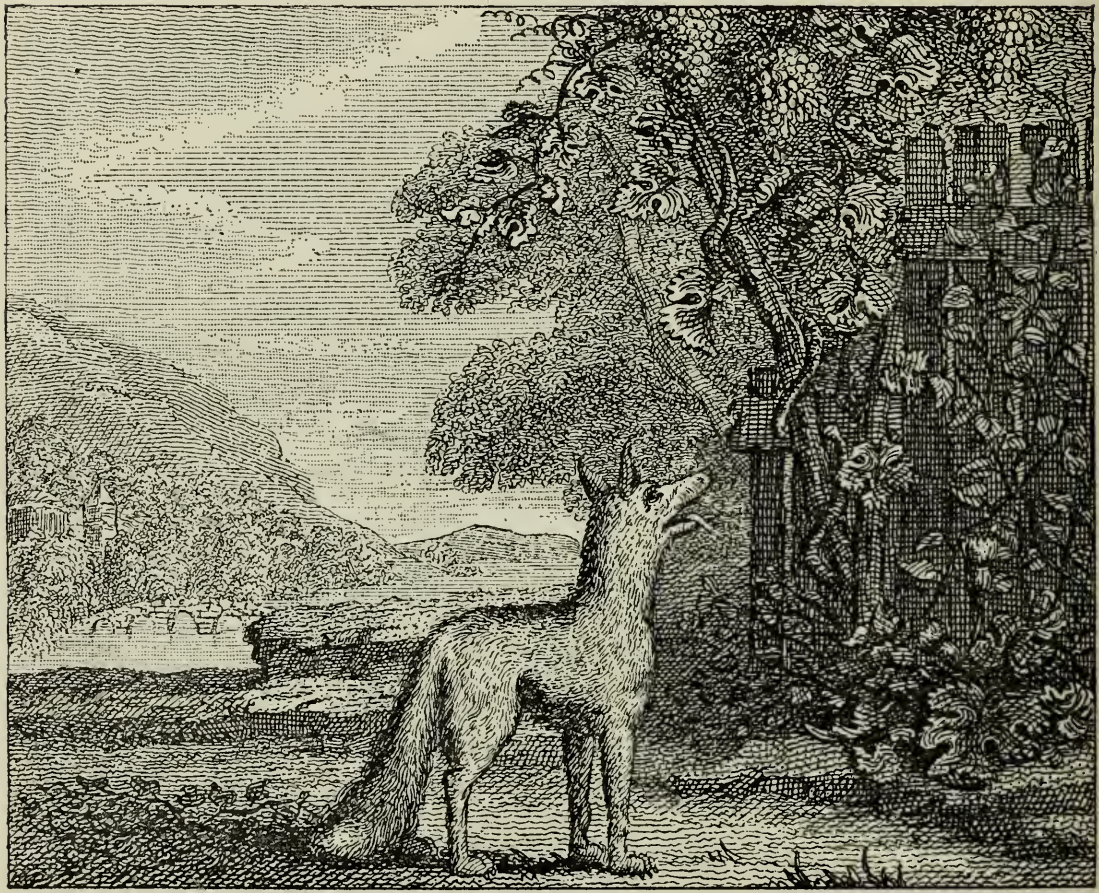
"A Spanish lord, having frequently played at chess with Philip II. and won all the games, perceived when his Majesty rose from play that he was much ruffled with chagrin. The lord, when he returned home, said to his family,—'My children, we have nothing more to do at court; there we must expect no favour; for the King is offended at my having won of him every game of chess.' As chess entirely depends on the genius of the players, and not on fortune, King Philip, the chess-player, conceived that he ought to suffer no rival.

"This appears still clearer by the anecdote told of the Earl of Sunderland, minister to George I., who was partial to the game of chess. He once played with the Laird of Cluny and the learned Cunningham, the editor of *Horace*. Cunningham, with too much skill and too much sincerity, beat his lordship. The Earl was so fretted at his superiority and surliness that he dismissed him without any reward. Cluny allowed himself sometimes to be beaten; and by that means got his pardon, with something handsome besides."—Isaac D'Israeli.

FABLE XCIII.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

A FOX, very hungry, chanced to come into a vineyard, where there hung branches of charming ripe grapes, but nailed up to a trellis so high that he leaped till he quite tired himself, without being able to reach one of them. At last—"Let who will take them!" says he; "they are but green and sour; so I will even let them alone."



'Tis no use crying for the moon.

"Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?

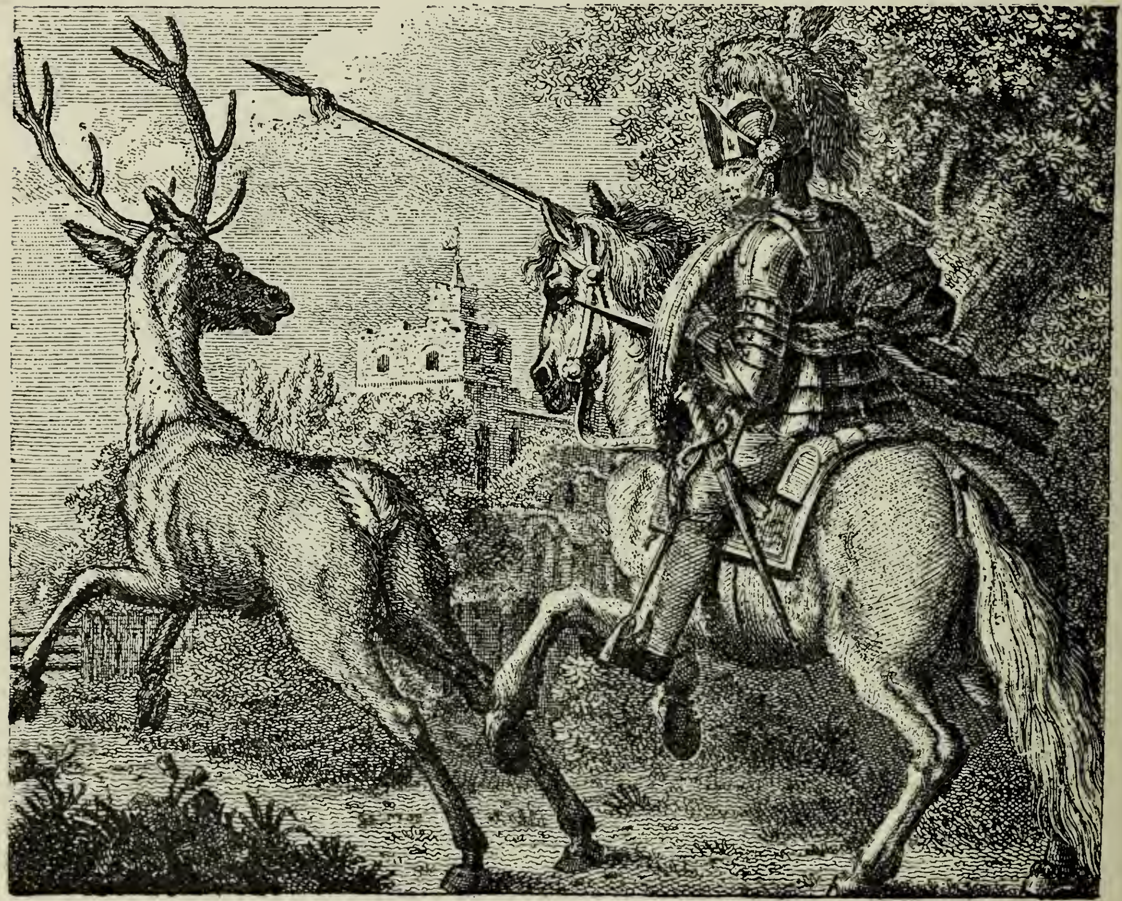
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
'Cause another's rosy are?

"Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flow'ry meads in May,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?"

George Wither.

FABLE XCIV.

THE HORSE AND THE STAG.



THE Stag, with his sharp horns, got the better of the Horse, and drove him clear out of the pasture where they used to feed together. So the latter craved the assistance of man; and, in order to receive the benefit of it, suffered him to put a bridle into his mouth and a saddle upon his back. By this way of proceeding he entirely defeated his enemy; but was mightily disappointed when, upon returning thanks, and desiring to be dismissed, he received this answer:—"No. I never knew before how useful a drudge you were; now I have found what you are good for, you may depend upon it I will keep you to it."

You may pay too dear for your whistle.

"But what will Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soared, obnoxious, first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils."

MILTON: *Paradise Lost.*

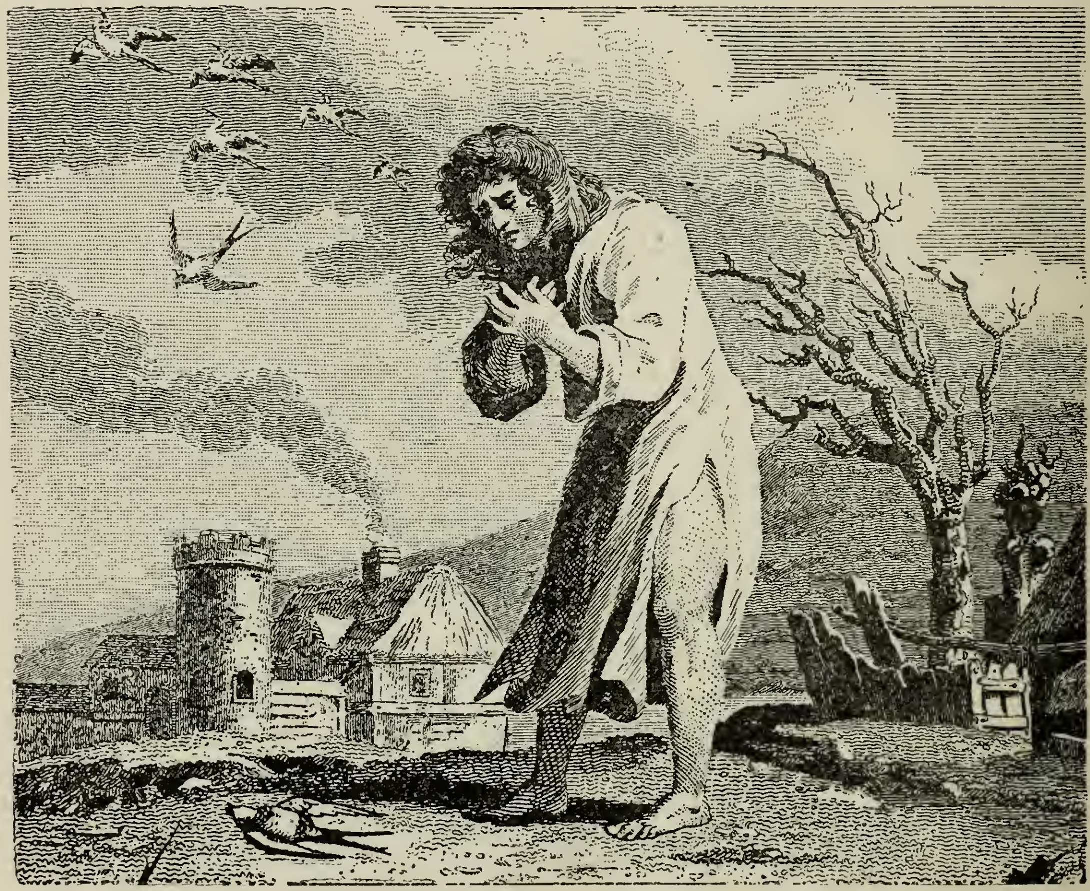
"Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot
That it do singe yourself: we may outrun,
By violent swiftness, that which we run at,
And lose by overrunning."

SHAKESPEARE: *King Henry VIII.*

FABLE XCV.

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE SWALLOW.

A PRODIGAL young Spendthrift, who had wasted his whole patrimony in taverns and gaming-houses, among lewd, idle company, was taking a melancholy walk near a brook. It was in the month of January; and happened to be one of those warm, sunshiny days which sometimes smile upon us even in that wintry season of the year; and to make it the more flattering, a Swallow, which had made his appearance, by mistake, too soon, flew skimming along upon the surface of the water. The giddy youth observing this, without any



further consideration, concluded that summer was now come, and that he should have little or no occasion for clothes, so went and pawned them at the broker's, and ventured the money for one stake more, among his sharping companions. When this, too, was gone the same way with the rest, he took another solitary walk in the same place as before. But the weather being severe and frosty, had made everything look with an aspect very different from what it did before: the brook was quite frozen over, and the poor Swallow lay dead upon the bank of it; the very sight of which cooled the young Spark's brains; and, coming to a kind of sense of his misery, he reproached the deceased bird as the author of all his misfortunes:—"Ah, wretch that thou wert!" says he; "thou hast undone both thyself and me, who was so credulous as to depend upon thee."

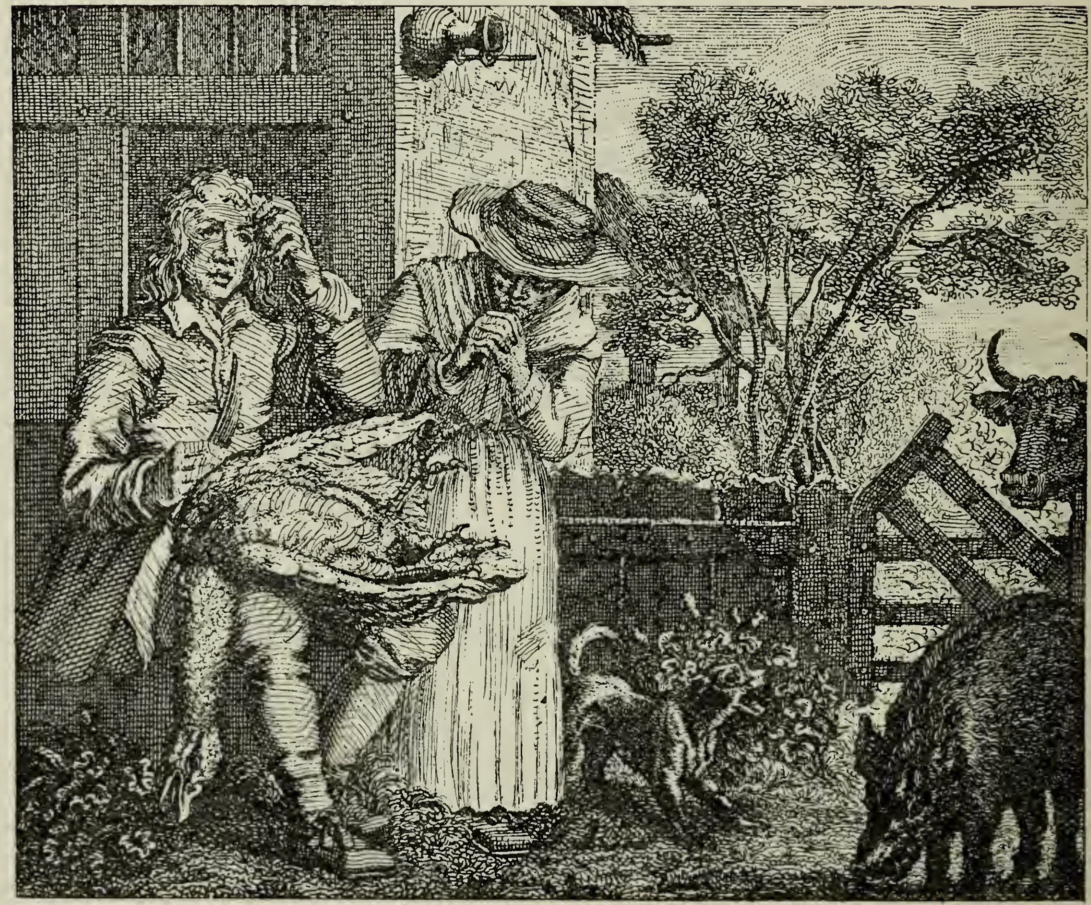
The prudent man looketh well to his going.

"This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length broke under me, and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:
I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have:
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again." *King Henry VIII.*

FABLE XCVI.

THE MAN AND HIS GOOSE.

A CERTAIN Man had a Goose, which laid him a golden egg every day. But, not contented with this, which rather increased than abated his avarice, he was resolved to kill the Goose, and cut up her belly, that so he might come at the inexhaustible treasure which he fancied she had within her. He did so; and, to his great sorrow and disappointment, found nothing.



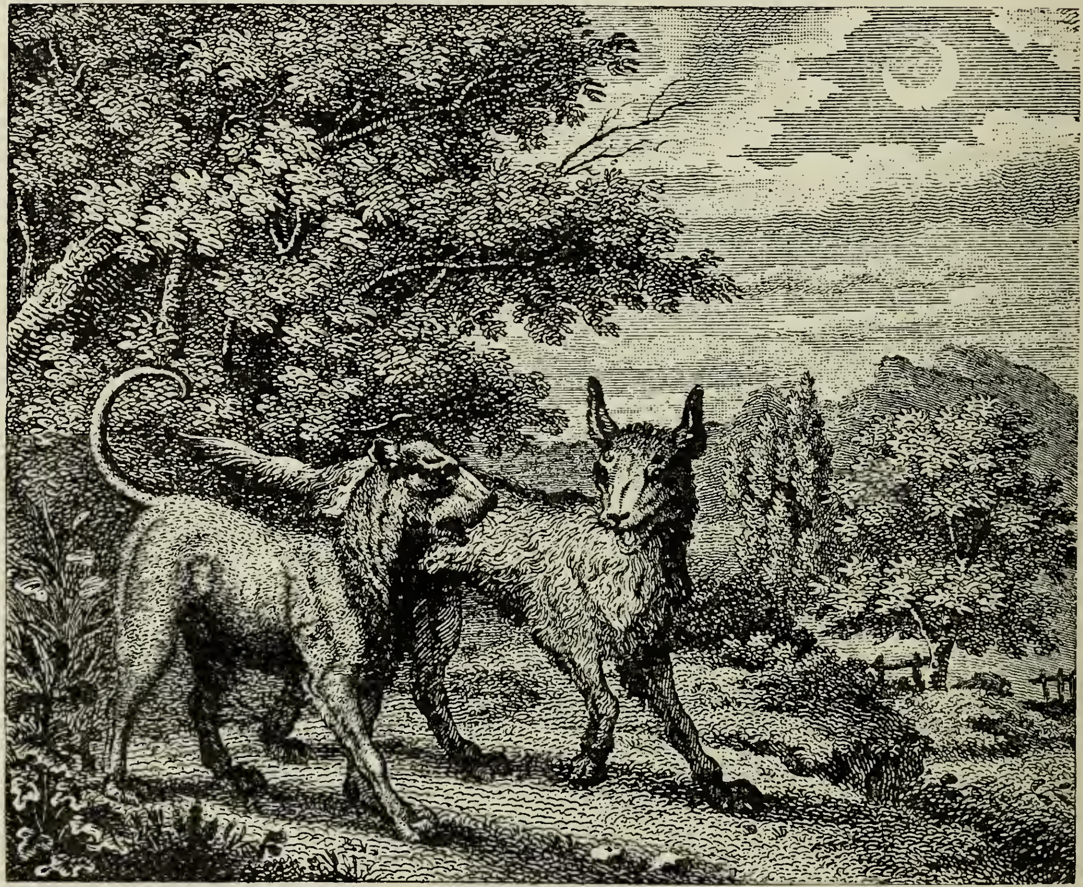
Be not greedy of filthy lucre.

"Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly. Yet have no abstract or friarly contempt of them; but distinguish, as Cicero saith well of Rabinius Posthumus: *In studio rei amplificandæ, apparebat, non avaritiæ prædam, sed instrumentum bonitati quæri.* Hearken also to Solomon, and beware of hasty gathering of riches: *Qui festinat ad divitias, non erit insons.* The poets feign that when Plutus (which is riches) is sent from Jupiter, he limps, and goes slowly, but when he is sent from Pluto, he runs, and is swift of foot; meaning that riches gotten by good means and just labour pace slowly, but when they come by the death of others (as by the course of inheritance, testaments, and the like) they come tumbling upon a man. But it might be applied likewise to Pluto, taking him for the Devil. For when riches come from the Devil (as by fraud, and oppression, and unjust means) they come upon speed."—BACON: *Of Riches.*

FABLE XCVII.

THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

A LEAN, hungry, half-starved Wolf happened, one moonshiny night, to meet with a jolly, plump, well-fed mastiff; and, after the first compliments were passed, says the Wolf—"You look extremely well; I protest, I think I never saw a more graceful, comely person; but how comes it about, I beseech you, that you should live so much better than I? I may say, without vanity, that I venture fifty times more than you do; and yet I am almost ready to perish with hunger." The Dog answered very bluntly—"Why, you may live as well if you will do the



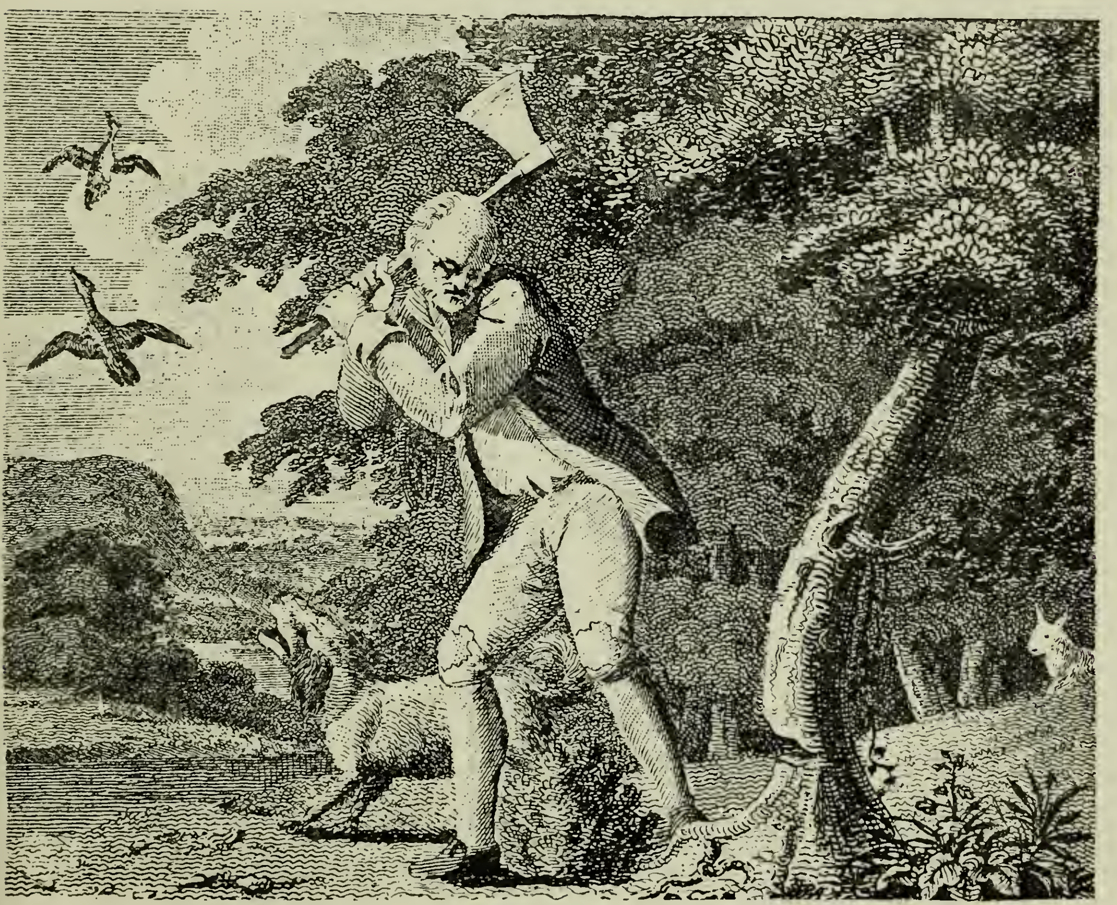
same for it that I do."—"Indeed! What is that?" says he.—"Why," says the Dog, "only to guard the house a-nights, and keep it from thieves."—"With all my heart," replies the Wolf, "for at present I have but a sorry time of it; and I think to change my hard lodging in the woods, where I endure rain, frost, and snow, for a warm roof over my head, and a bellyful of good victuals, will be no bad bargain."—"True," says the Dog; "therefore you have nothing more to do but to follow me." Now, as they were jogging on together, the Wolf spied a crease in the Dog's neck, and, having a strange curiosity, could not forbear asking him what it meant. "Pugh! nothing," says the Dog.—"Nay, but pray——" says the Wolf.—"Why," says the Dog, "if you must know, I am tied up in the day-time, because I am a little fierce, for fear I should bite people, and am only let loose a-nights. But this is done with design, to make me sleep a-days more than anything else, and that I may watch the better in the night-time; for, as soon as ever the twilight appears, out I am turned, and may go where I please. Then my master brings me plates of bones from the table with his own hands, and whatever scraps are left by any of the family all fall to my share; for, you must know, I am a favourite with everybody. So you see how you are to live. Come, come along; what is the matter with you?"—"No," replied the Wolf; "I beg your pardon; keep your happiness all to yourself. Liberty is the word with me; and I would not be a king upon the terms you mention."

Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, slavery, thou art a bitter draught.

The lowest condition of life, with freedom attending it, is better than the most exalted station under a restraint. Æsop and Phædrus, who had both felt the bitter effects of slavery, though the latter of them had the good fortune to have the mildest prince that ever was for his master, cannot forbear taking all opportunities to express their great abhorrence of servitude, and their passion for liberty, upon any terms whatsoever. Indeed, a state of slavery, with whatever seeming grandeur and happiness it may be attended, is yet so precarious a thing, that he must want sense, honour, courage, and all manner of virtue who can endure to prefer it in his choice. A man who has so little honour as to bear to be a slave, when it is in his power to prevent or redress it, would make no scruple to cut the throats of his fellow-creatures, or to do any wickedness that the wanton unbridled will of his tyrannical master could suggest.

FABLE XCVIII.

THE WOOD AND THE CLOWN.



A COUNTRY Fellow came one day into the wood, and looked about him with some concern; upon which the Trees, with a curiosity natural to some other creatures, asked him what he wanted. He replied—"That he only wanted a piece of wood to make a handle to his hatchet." Since that was all, it was voted unanimously that he should have a piece of good, sound, tough ash. But he had no sooner received and fitted it for his purpose, than he began to lay about him unmercifully, and to hack and hew without distinction, felling the noblest trees in all the forest. Then the Oak is said to have spoke thus to the Beech in a low whisper,—"Brother, we must take it for our pains."

Every man is the architect of his own fortune.

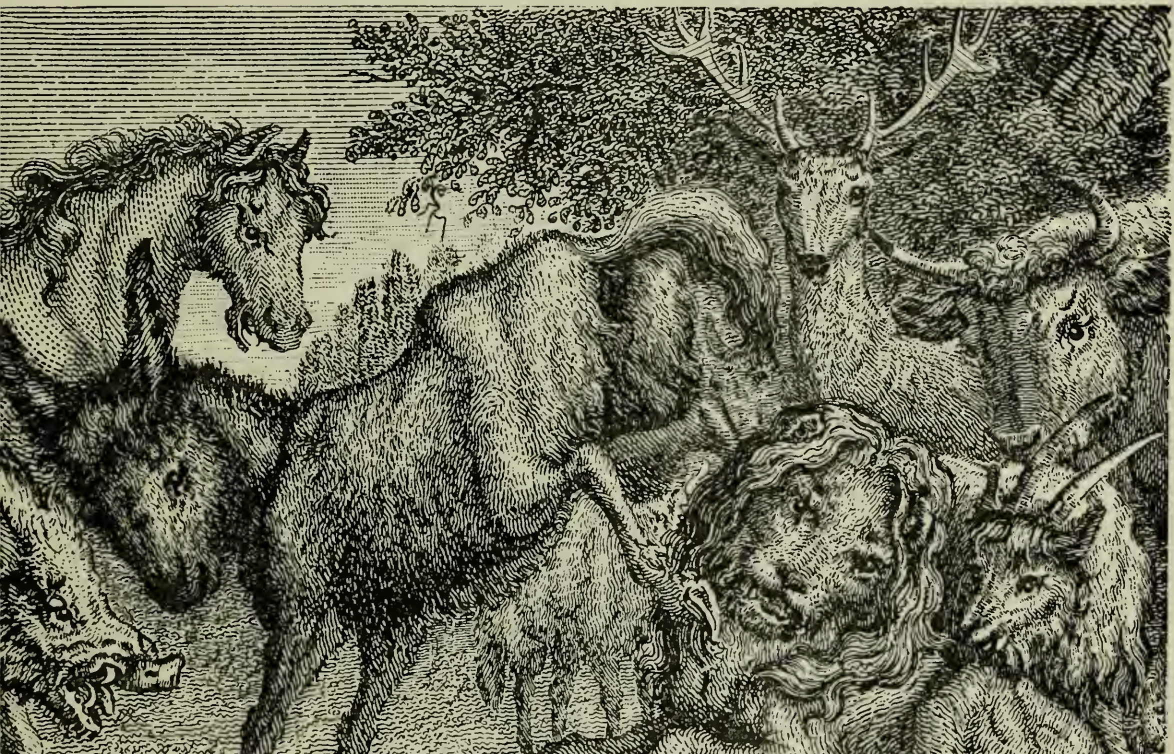
No people are more justly liable to suffer than they who furnish their enemies with any kind of assistance. It is generous to forgive; it is enjoined us by religion to love our enemies; but he that trusts an enemy, much more contributes to the strengthening and arming of him, may almost depend upon repenting him for his inadvertent benevolence; and has, moreover, this to add to his distress, that, when he might have prevented it, he brought his misfortune upon himself by his own credulity.

Any person in a community, by what name or title soever distinguished, who affects a power which may possibly hurt the people, is an enemy to that people, and therefore they ought not to trust him; for though he were ever so fully determined not to abuse such a power, yet he is so far a bad man, as he disturbs the people's quiet, and makes them jealous and uneasy by desiring to have it, or even retaining it, when it may prove mischievous. If we consult history, we shall find that the thing called Prerogative has been claimed and contended for chiefly by those who never intended to make a good use of it; and as readily resigned and thrown up by just and wise princes, who had the true interest of their people at heart. How like senseless stocks do they act who, by complimenting some capricious mortal, from time to time, with parcels of prerogative, at last put it out of their power to defend and maintain themselves in their just and natural liberty!

FABLE XCIX.

THE OLD LION.

A LION, worn out with old age, lay fetching his last gasp, and agonising in the convulsive struggles of death. Upon which occasion several of the beasts, who had formerly been sufferers by him, came and revenged themselves upon him. The Boar, with his mighty tusks, drove at him in a stroke that glanced like lightning. And the Bull gored him with his violent horns. Which, when the Ass saw they might do without any danger, he too came up, and threw his heels into the Lion's face. Upon which, the poor old expiring tyrant uttered these words



with his last dying groan:—"Alas! how grievous is it to suffer insults, even from the brave and the valiant; but to be spurned by so base a creature as this is, who is the disgrace of Nature, is worse than dying ten thousand deaths."

A living dog is better than a dead lion.

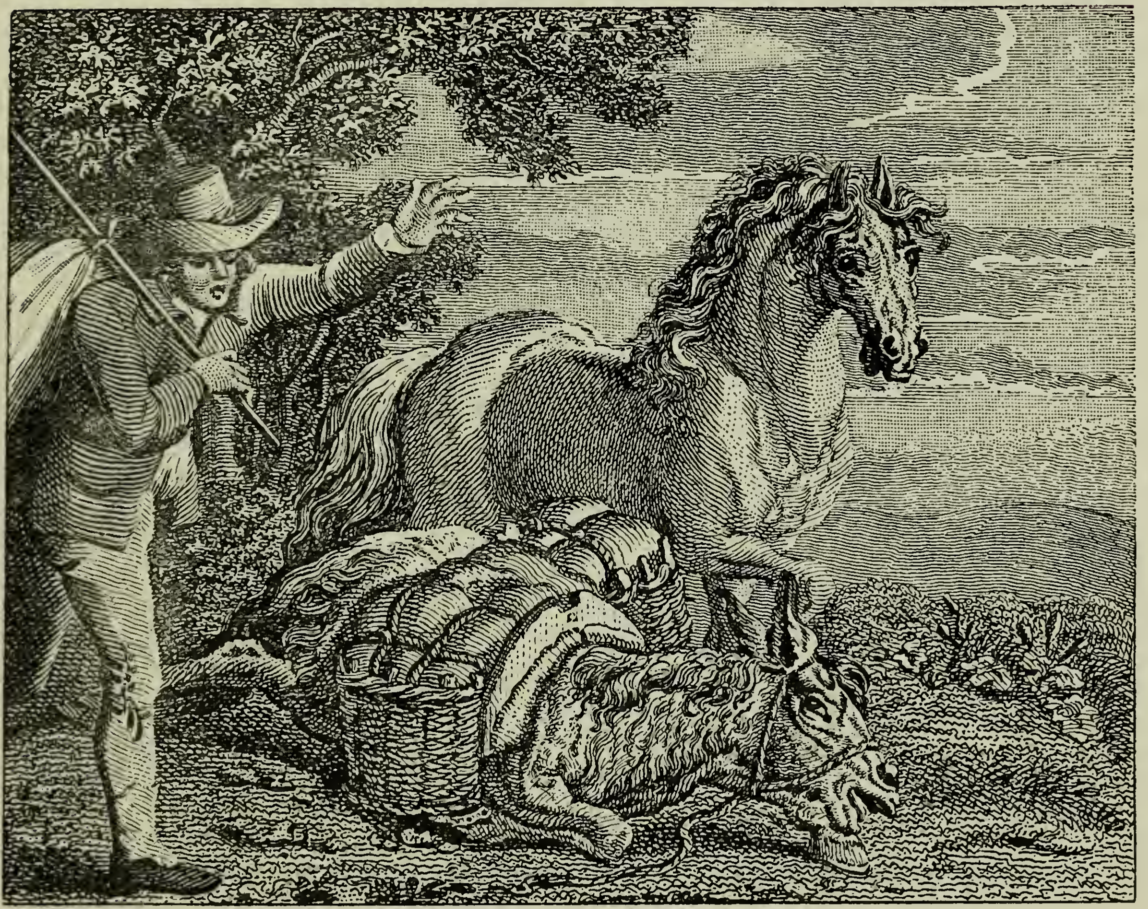
"I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."
SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth.*

"To exult,
Even o'er an enemy oppressed, and heap
Affliction on the afflicted, is the mark
And the mean triumph of a dastard soul."
TOBIAS SMOLLETT.

FABLE C.

THE HORSE AND THE LOADED ASS.

AN idle Horse, and an Ass labouring under a heavy burden, were travelling the road together; they both belonged to a country fellow, who trudged it on foot by them. The Ass, ready to faint under his heavy load, entreated the horse to assist him, and lighten his burden, by taking some of it upon his back. The Horse was ill-natured, and refused to do it; upon which the poor Ass tumbled down in the midst of the highway, and expired in an instant. The countryman ungirted his pack-saddle, and tried several ways to relieve him, but



all to no purpose; which, when he perceived, he took the whole burden, and laid it upon the Horse, together with the skin of the dead Ass; so that the Horse, by his moroseness in refusing to do a small kindness, justly brought upon himself a great inconvenience.

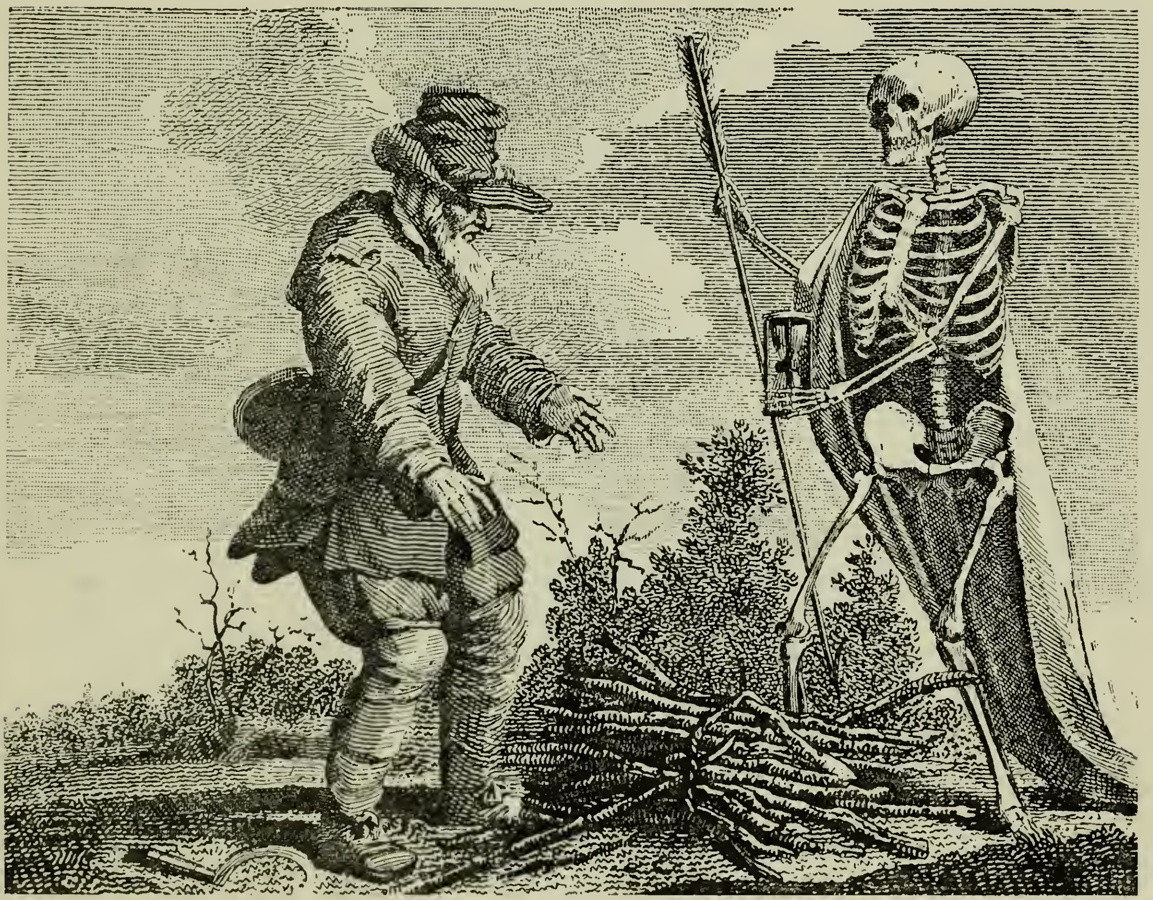
Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

"A poor Irish widow, her husband having died in one of the lanes of Edinburgh, went forth with her three children, bare of all resource, to solicit help from the charitable establishments of that city. At this charitable establishment, and then at that, she was refused; referred from one to the other, helped by none; till she had exhausted them all; till her strength and heart failed her; she sank down in typhus fever; died, and infected her lane with fever, so that 'seventeen other persons' died of fever there in consequence. The humane physician (Dr Alison) asks thereupon, as with a heart too full for speaking, 'Would it not have been *economy* to help this poor widow? She took typhus fever and killed seventeen of you!'" —CARLYLE: *Past and Present.*

FABLE CI.

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH.

A POOR feeble Old Man, who had crawled out into a neighbouring wood to gather a few sticks, had made up his bundle, and, laying it over his shoulders, was trudging homeward with it; but, what with age, and the length of the way, and the weight of his burden, he grew so faint and weak that he sunk under it; and, as he sat on the ground, called upon Death to come, once for all, and ease him of his troubles. Death no sooner heard him but he came and demanded of him what he wanted. The poor old creature, who little thought



Death had been so near, and frighted almost out of his senses with his terrible aspect, answered him, trembling, that having by chance let his bundle of sticks fall, and being too infirm to get it up himself, he had made bold to call upon him to help him; that, indeed, this was all he wanted at present; and that he hoped his worship was not offended with him for the liberty he had taken in so doing.

'Tis easier to raise spirits than to lay them.

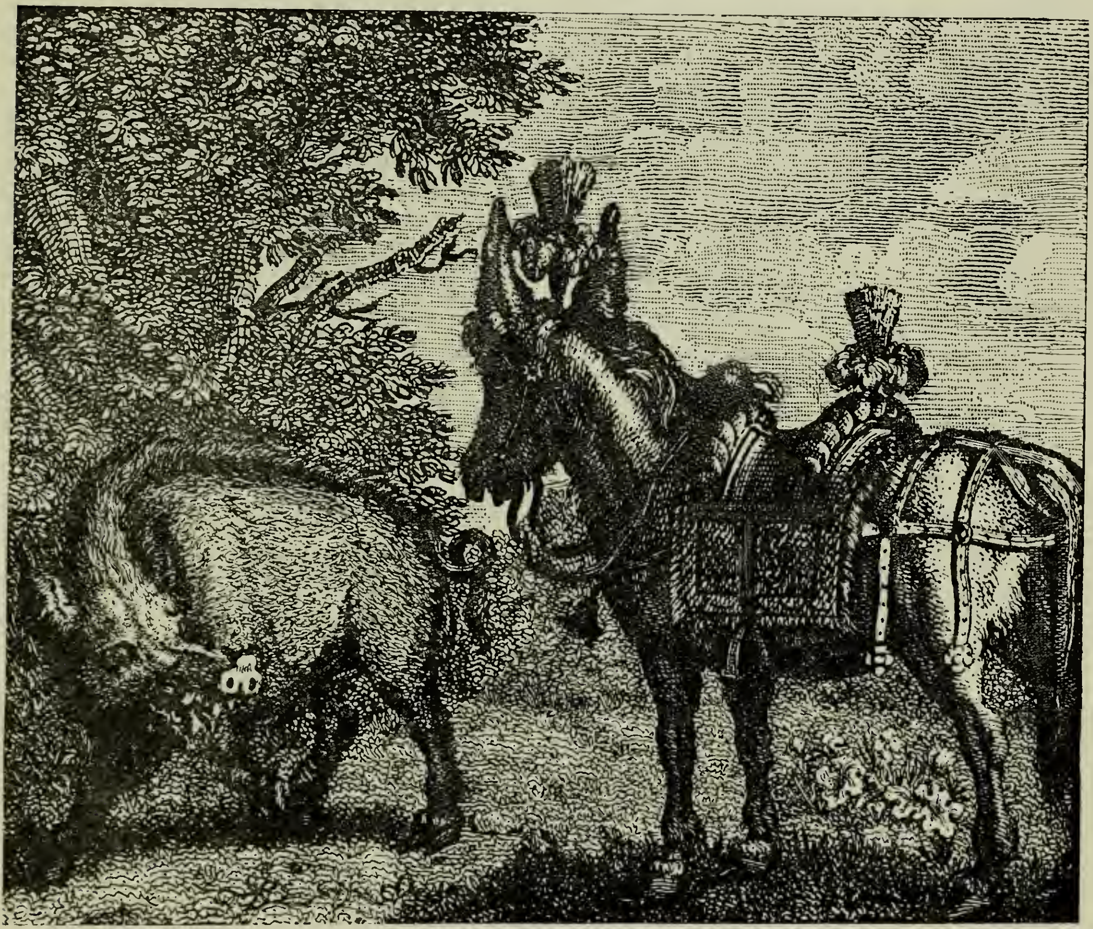
"To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?"

SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet.*

FABLE CII.

THE BOAR AND THE ASS.

A LITTLE scoundrel of an Ass, happening to meet with a Boar, had a mind to be arch upon him:—"And so, brother," says he, "your humble servant." The Boar, somewhat nettled at his familiarity, bristled up to him, and told him he was surprised to hear him utter so impudent an untruth, and was just going to show his noble resentment by giving him a rip in the flank; but wisely stifling his passion, he contented himself with only saying—"Go, you sorry beast! I could be amply and easily revenged of you, but I do not care to foul my tusks with the blood of so base a creature."



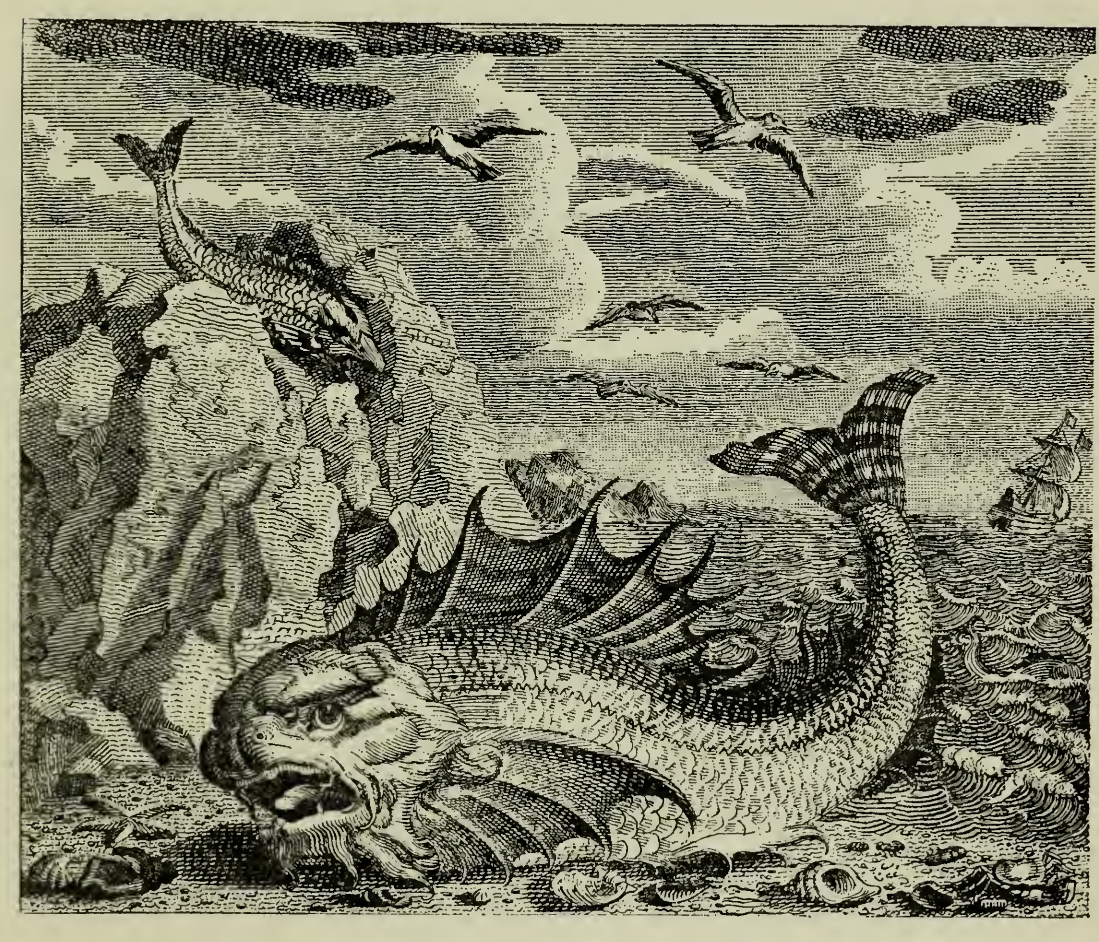
Beware the fury of a patient man.

"When you are shocked by any man's impudence, put this question to yourself: 'Is it possible for such impudent people not to be in the world?' No, indeed. Why, then, do you demand an impossibility? For this ill-behaved fellow is one of those necessary rascals that the world cannot dispense with. This reflection will furnish you with patience for a knave, a faithless person, or any other evil body. For when you consider that there is no living without such men, you will treat them better individually; and to fortify you further, consider what an antidote nature has given you against this disease. For suppose you have to do with a troublesome blockhead, you have meekness and temper given you for your guard, and so with the rest. It is likewise in your power to inform the man better and set him right; for everyone that does an ill action is really out of his way, and misses his mark, though he may not know it."—MARCUS AURELIUS.

FABLE CIII.

THE TUNNY AND THE DOLPHIN.

A FISH called a Tunny, being pursued by a Dolphin, and driven with great violence, not minding which way he went, was thrown by the force of the waves upon a rock, and left there. His death now was inevitable; but, casting his eyes on one side, and seeing the Dolphin in the same condition lie gasping by him,—"Well," say he, "I must die, it is true; but I die with pleasure, when I behold him who is the cause of it involved in the same fate."



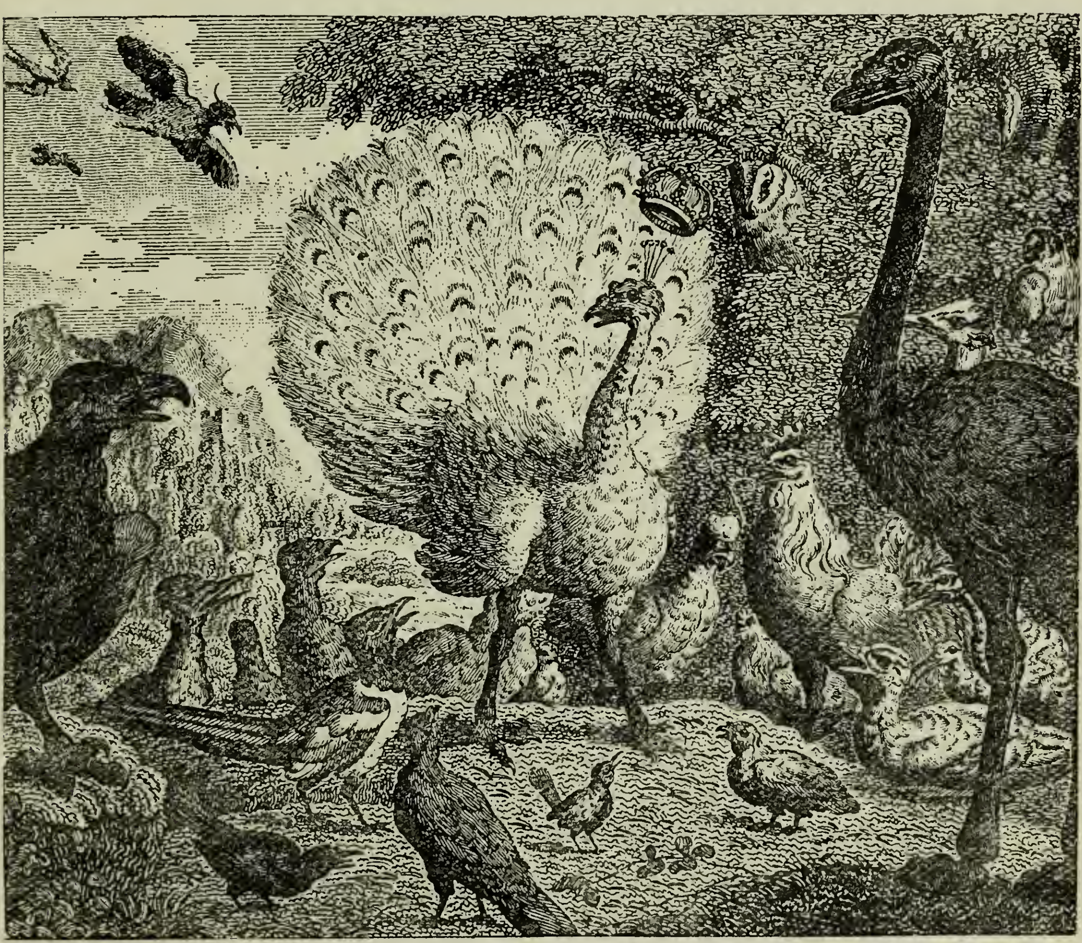
Sweet is Revenge.

"There is some comfort in company, even in a state of adversity. Society is so necessary and agreeable to mankind in all cases, that death is certainly the more uneasy for a man's going alone into another world. But the consolation pointed at in this fable is that which an envious man takes in the ruin of his enemy. There is a memorable instance to this purpose, of a gentleman that had an estate for lives, and two of his tenants in the lease. One of them dies, and the other desires his landlord to lay both farms into one, and accept of him for his tenant. The gentleman fairly excused himself, and away goes the man in a rage to his wife, told her how it was, and swore a great oath, that he would be revenged of his landlord. This was in harvest-time, and he went out next day to his reapers, but stayed so long that his wife sent up and down to look after him. To shorten the story, they found him at last in a ditch, vomiting his heart out. The man, it seems, had poisoned himself, and the revenge upon his landlord was the defeating him of his estate by destroying the last life in his lease. In one word, revenge stops at nothing that's violent and wicked. It divides the dearest friends, embroils governments, and tears families to pieces. But to say no more on it, the histories of all ages are full of the tragical outrages that have been executed by this diabolical passion; beside, that it hardens people into a brutal contempt of death (as in the fables above), where they may but see their enemies fall for company."—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

FABLE CIV.

THE PEACOCK AND THE MAGPIE.

THE birds met together upon a time to choose a king; and the Peacock standing candidate, displayed his gaudy plumes, and catched the eyes of the silly multitude with the richness of his feathers. The majority declared for him, and clapped their wings with great applause: but, just as they were going to proclaim him, the Magpie stept forth in the midst of the assembly, and addressed himself thus to the new king:—"May it please your majesty elect to permit one of your unworthy subjects to represent to you his suspicions and apprehensions,



in the face of this whole congregation: We have chosen you for our king, we have put our lives and fortunes into your hands, and our whole hope and dependence is upon you; if, therefore, the eagle, or the vulture, or the kite should at any time make a descent upon us, as it is highly probable they will, may your majesty be so gracious as to dispel our fears, and clear our doubts about that matter, by letting us know how you intend to defend us against them?" This pithy, unanswerable question drew the whole audience into so just a reflection, that they soon resolved to proceed to a new choice. But, from that time, the Peacock has been looked upon as a vain, insignificant pretender, and the Magpie esteemed as eminent a speaker as any among the whole community of birds.

Old birds are not to be caught with chaff.

"O ye kind Heavens, there is in every Nation and Community a *fittest*, a wisest, bravest, best; whom could we find and make king over us, all were in very truth well; the best that God and nature had permitted *us* to make it! By what art discover him? Will the Heavens in their pity teach us no art; for our need of him is great!

"Ballot-boxes, reform bills, winnowing machines, all these are good, or are not so good;—alas, brethren, how *can* these, I say, be other than inadequate, be other than failures, melancholy to behold? Dim all souls of men to the Divine, the high and awful meaning of Human Worth and Truth, we shall never, by all the machinery in Birmingham, discover the true and worthy. It is written 'If we are ourselves valets, there shall exist no hero for us; we shall not know the hero when we see him'; we shall take the quack for a hero, and cry, audibly through all the ballot-boxes and machinery whatsoever, Thou art he; be thou king over us."—THOMAS CARLYLE: *Past and Present.*

FABLE CV.

THE FORESTER AND THE LION.

THE Forester meeting with a Lion one day, they discoursed together for a while without differing much in opinion. At last, a dispute happening to arise about the point of superiority between a Man and a Lion, the Man, wanting a better argument, shewed the Lion a marble monument, on which was placed the statue of a Man striding over a vanquished Lion. "If this," says the Lion, "is all you have to say for it, let us be the carvers, and we will make the Lion striding over the Man."

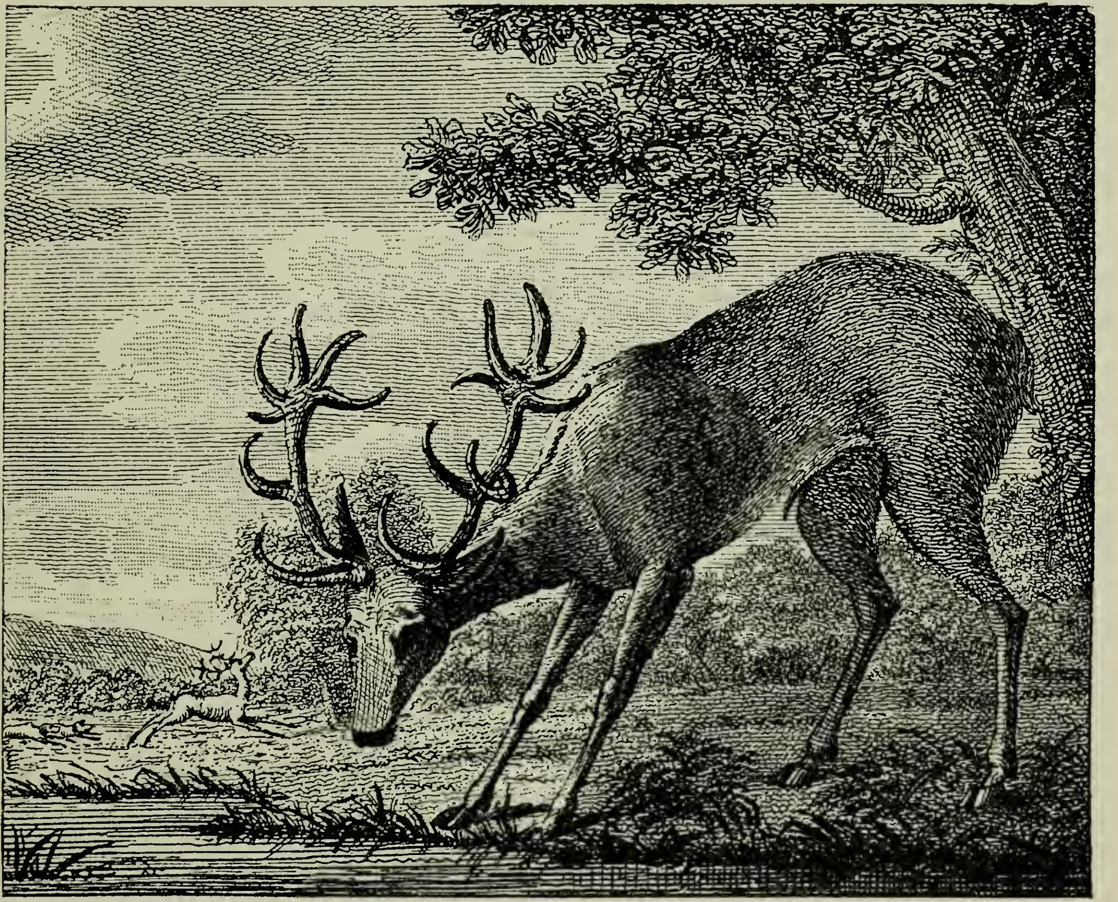
No man is a fair witness in his own cause.

Contending parties are very apt to appeal for the truth to records written by their own side; but nothing is more unfair, and at the same time insignificant and unconvincing. Such is the partiality of mankind in favour of themselves and their own actions, that it is almost impossible to come at any certainty by reading the accounts which are written on one side only. We have few or no memoirs come down to us of what was transacted in the world during the sovereignty of ancient Rome but what were written by those who had a dependency upon it; therefore it is no wonder that they appear, upon most occasions, to have been so great and glorious a nation. What their contemporaries of other countries thought of them we cannot tell, otherwise than from their own writers: it is not impossible but they might have described them as a barbarous, rapacious, treacherous, unpolite people; who, upon their conquest of Greece, for some time made as great havoc and destruction of the arts and sciences as their fellow plunderers the Goths and Vandals did afterwards in Italy. What monsters would our own party-zealots make of each other if the transactions of the times were to be handed down to posterity by a warm, hearty man on either side! and, were such records to survive two or three centuries, with what perplexities and difficulties must they embarrass a young historian, as by turns he consulted them for the characters of his great forefathers! If it should so happen, it were to be wished this application might be living at the same time; that young readers, instead of doubting to which they should give their credit, would not fail to remember that this was the work of a man, that of a lion.

FABLE CVI.

THE STAG LOOKING INTO THE WATER.

A STAG that had been drinking at a clear spring, saw himself in the water; and, pleased with the prospect, stood afterwards for some time contemplating and surveying his shape and features from head to foot. "Ah!" says he, "what a glorious pair of branching horns are there! how gracefully do those antlers hang over my forehead, and give an agreeable turn to my whole face! if some other parts of my body were but proportionable to them, I would turn my back to nobody; but I have a set of such legs, as really makes me ashamed to



see them. People may talk what they please of their conveniences, and what great need we stand in of them upon several occasions; but, for my part, I find them so very slender and unsightly, that I had as lief have none at all." While he was giving himself these airs, he was alarmed with the noise of some huntsmen and a pack of hounds, that had been just laid on upon the scent, and were making towards him. Away he flies in some consternation, and, bounding nimbly over the plain, threw dogs and men at a vast distance behind him. After which, taking a very thick copse, he had the ill fortune to be entangled by his horns in a thicket, where he was held fast till the hounds came in and pulled him down. Finding now how it was like to go with him, in the pangs of death he is said to have uttered these words:—"Unhappy creature that I am! I am too late convinced that what I prided myself in has been the cause of my undoing, and what I so much disliked was the only thing that could have saved me."

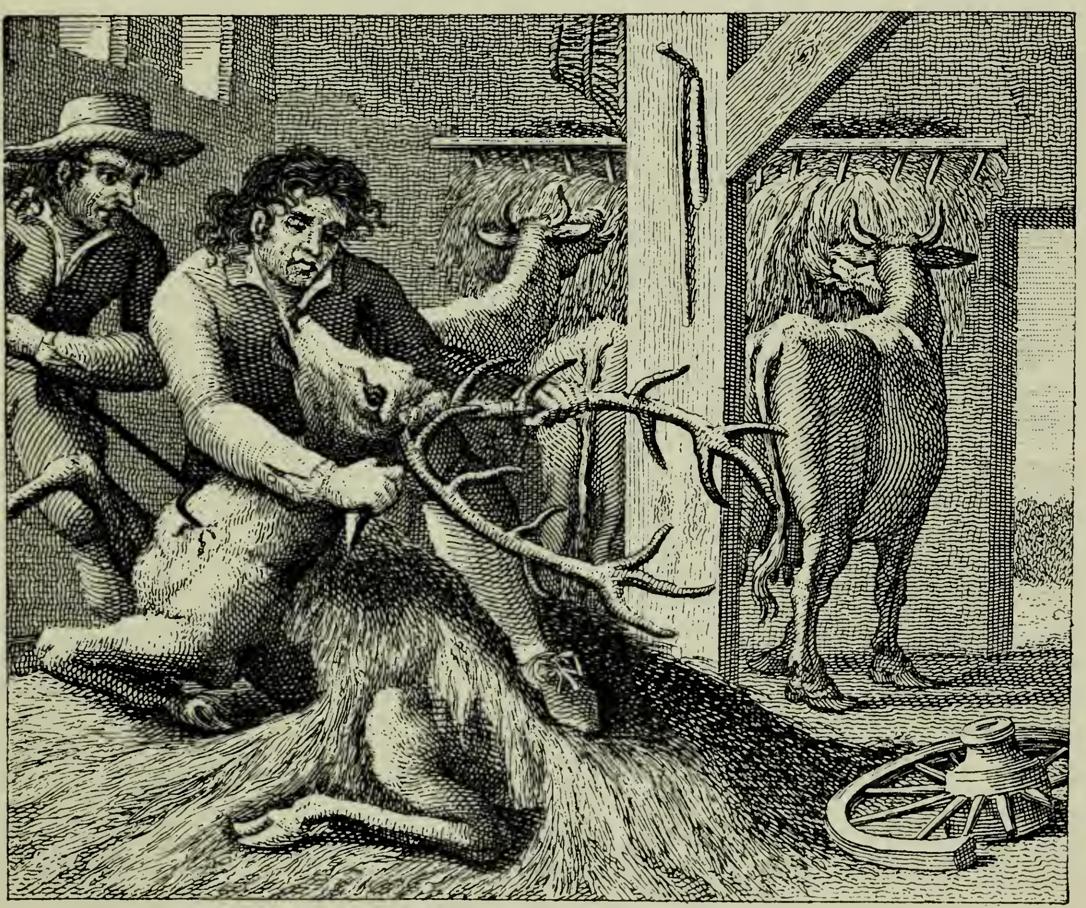
Look to use before ornament.

"Quarrel not rashly with adversities not yet understood, and overlook not the mercies often bound up in them; for we consider not sufficiently the good of evils, nor fairly compute the mercies of Providence in things afflictive at first hand. The famous Andreas Doria being invited to a feast by Aloysio Fieschi, with design to kill him, just the night before fell mercifully into a fit of the gout, and so escaped that mischief. When Cato intended to kill himself, from a blow which he gave his servant, who would not reach his sword unto him, his hand so swelled that he had much ado to effect his design. Hereby any but a resolved stoic might have taken a fair hint of consideration, and that some merciful genius would have contrived his preservation. To be sagacious in such intercurrences is not superstition, but wary and pious discretion; and to contemn such hints were to be deaf unto the speaking hand of God, wherein Socrates and Cardan would hardly have been mistaken."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Christian Morals.*

FABLE CVII.

THE STAG IN THE OX-STALL.

A STAG, roused out of his thick cover in the midst of the forest, and driven hard by the hounds, made towards a farm-house, and seeing the door of an Ox-stall open, entered therein, and hid himself under a heap of straw. One of the oxen, turning his head about, asked him what he meant by venturing himself in such a place as that was, where he was sure to meet with his doom! "Ah!" says the Stag, "if you will but be so good as to favour me with your concealment, I hope I shall do well enough; I intend to make off again the first opportunity." Well, he staid there till towards night; in came the ox-man with a bundle of fodder, and never saw



him. In short, all the servants of the farm came and went, and not a soul of them smelt anything of the matter. Nay, the bailiff himself came, according to form, and looked in, but walked away, no wiser than the rest. Upon this the Stag, ready to jump out of his skin for joy, began to return thanks to the good-natured oxen, protesting that they were the most obliging people he had ever met with in his life. After he had done his compliments, one of them answered him gravely: "Indeed, we desire nothing more than to have it in our power to contribute to your escape; but there is a certain person, you little think of, who has a hundred eyes; if he should happen to come, I would not give this straw for your life." In the interim, comes home the master himself from a neighbour's where he had been invited to dinner; and, because he had observed the cattle to look but scurvily of late, he went up to the rack, and asked why they did not give them more fodder? then, casting his eyes downward, "Heyday!" says he; "why so sparing of your litter? pray scatter a little more here. And these cobwebs—but I have spoke so often, that unless I do it myself——" Thus, as he went on, prying into everything, he chanced to look where the Stag's horns lay sticking out of the straw; upon which he raised a hue-and-cry, called all his people about him, killed the poor Stag, and made a prize of him.

The ox knoweth his owner.

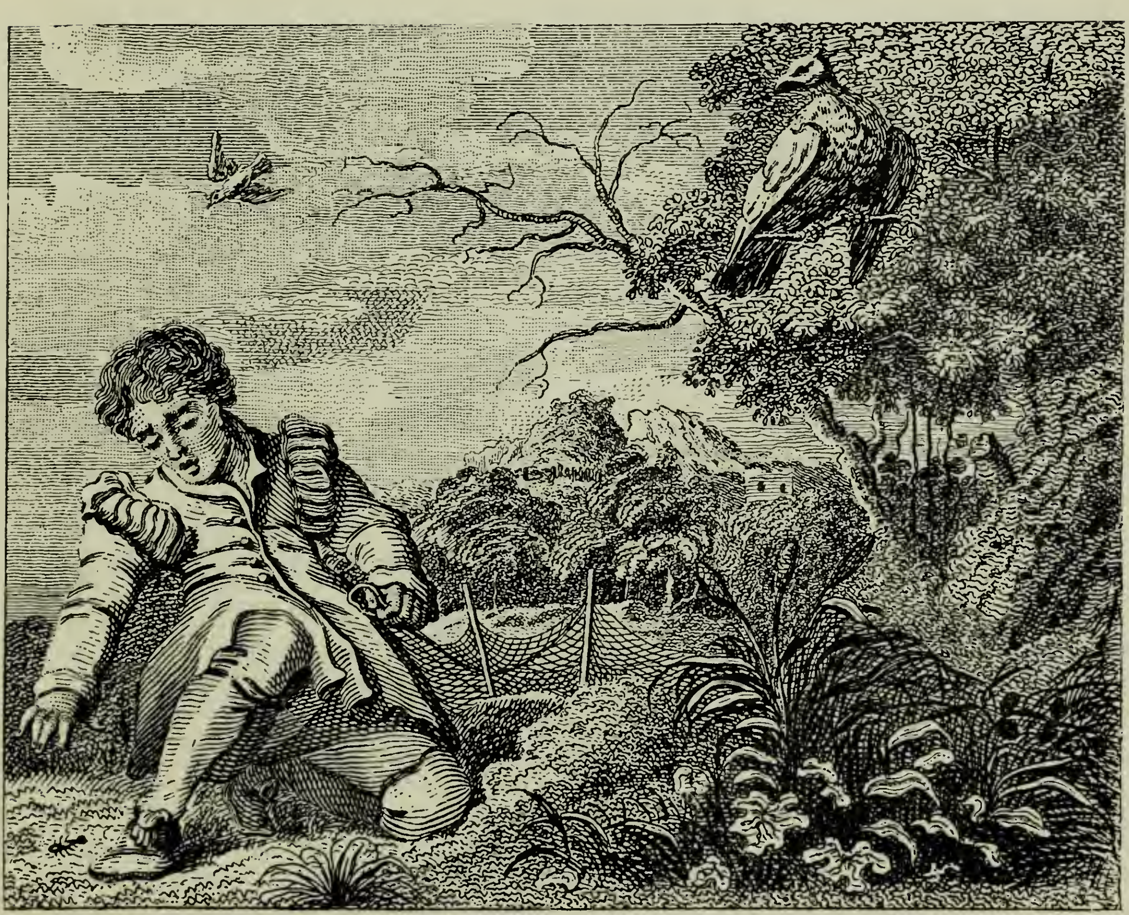
The moral of this fable is, that nobody looks after a man's affairs so well as he himself. Servants, being but hirelings, seldom have the true interest of their master at heart, but let things run on in a negligent, constant disorder; and this, generally, not so much for want of capacity as honesty. Their heads are taken up with the cultivation of their own private interest; for the service and promotion of which that of their master is postponed, and often entirely neglected.

Few families are reduced to poverty and distress merely by their own extravagance and indulgence in luxury: the inattention of servants swells every article of expense in domestic economy; and the retinue of great men, instead of exerting their industry to conduce as far as possible to the increase of their master's wealth, commonly exercise no other office than that of locusts and caterpillars, to consume and devour it.

FABLE CVIII.

THE DOVE AND THE ANT.

THE Ant, compelled by thirst, went to drink in a clear, purling rivulet; but the current, with its circling eddy, snatched her away, and carried her down the stream. A Dove, pitying her distressed condition, cropped a branch from a neighbouring tree and let it fall into the water, by means of which the Ant saved herself, and got ashore. Not long after, a fowler having a design upon the Dove, planted his nets in due order, without the bird's observing what he was about; which the Ant perceiving, just as he was going to put his design in execution,



she bit him by the heel, and made him give so sudden a start that the Dove took the alarm and flew away.

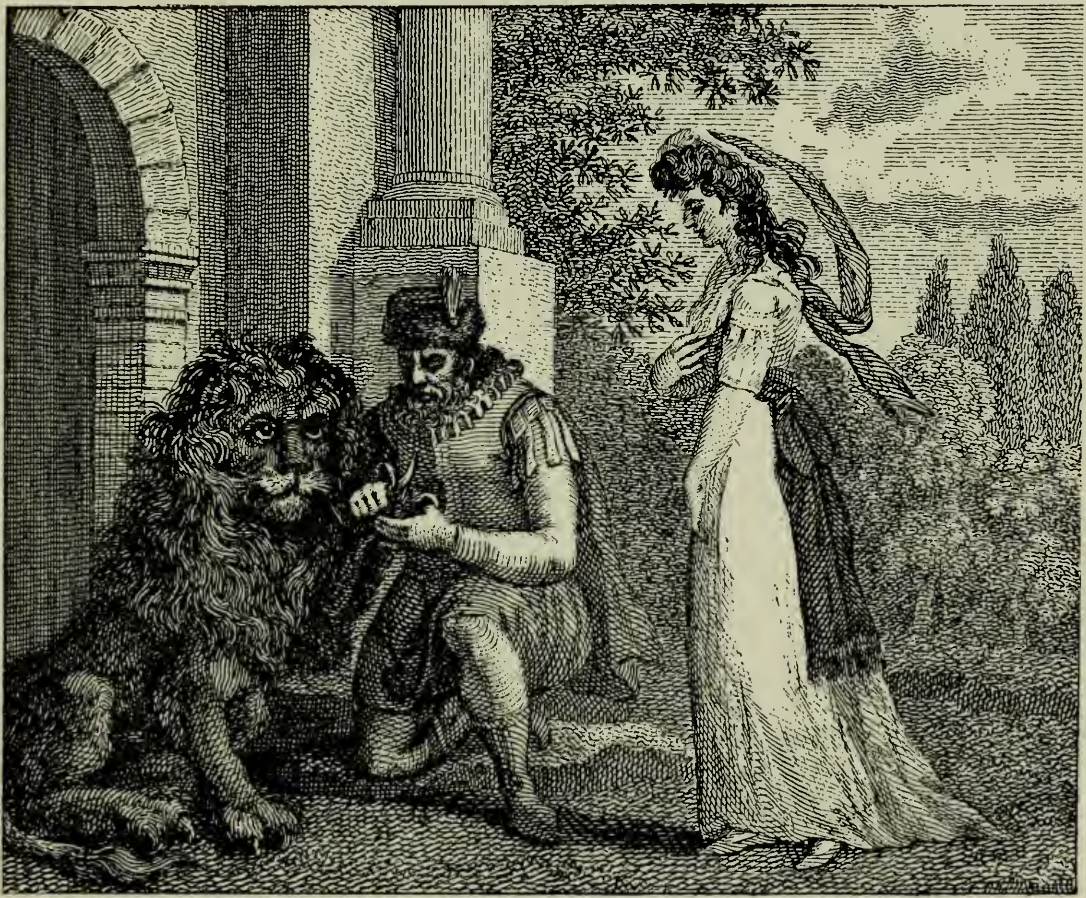
One good turn deserves another.

One good turn deserves another; and gratitude is excited by so noble and natural a spirit, that he ought to be looked upon as the vilest of creatures who has no sense of it. It is, indeed, so very just and equitable a thing, and so much every man's duty, that, to speak of it properly, one should not mention it as anything meritorious, or that may claim praise and admiration, any more than we should say a man ought to be rewarded or commended for not killing his father, or forbearing to set fire to his neighbour's house. The bright and shining piece of morality, therefore, which is recommended to us in this fable, is set forth in this example of the dove, who, without any obligation or expectation, does a voluntary office of charity to its fellow-creature in distress. The constant, uninterrupted practice of this virtue is the only thing in which we are capable of imitating the great Author of our being; whose beloved Son, besides the many precepts he has given to enforce this duty, used this expression as a common saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

FABLE CIX.

THE LION IN LOVE.

THE Lion by chance saw a fair Maid, the forester's daughter, as she was tripping over a lawn, and fell in love with her. Nay, so violent was his passion, that he could not live unless he made her his own; so that, without any more delay, he broke his mind to the father, and demanded the damsel for his wife. The man, as odd as the proposal seemed at first, yet soon recollected that by complying he might get the Lion into his power, but by refusing him should only exasperate and provoke his rage. Therefore he consented; but



told him it must be upon these conditions: that, considering the girl was young and tender, he must agree to let his teeth be plucked out and his claws cut off lest he should hurt her, or at least frighten her with the apprehension of them. The Lion was too much in love to hesitate; but was no sooner deprived of his teeth and claws, than the treacherous forester attacked him with a huge club, and knocked his brains out.

Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

"And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; that he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

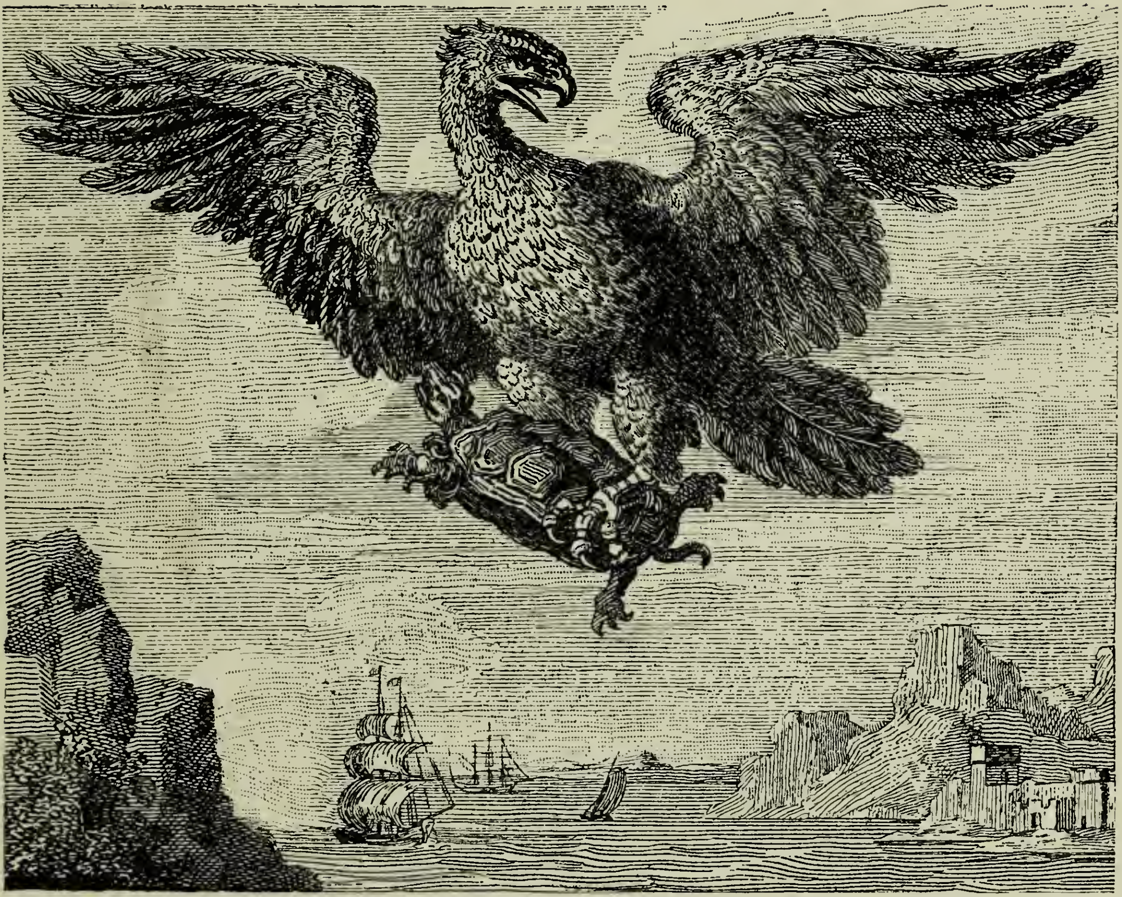
"And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

"But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house."—*Judges* xvi. 16–21.

FABLE CX.

The Tortoise and the Eagle.

The Tortoise, weary of his condition, by which he was confined to creep upon the ground, and being ambitious to have a prospect, and look about him, gave out that if any bird would take him up into the air, and show him the world, he would reward him with a discovery of many precious stones, which he knew were hidden in a certain place of the earth. The Eagle undertook to do as he desired, and, when he had performed his commission, demanded the reward; but finding the Tortoise could not make good his words, he stuck his



talons into the softer parts of his body, and made him a sacrifice to his revenge.

The labourer is worthy of his hire.

"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

"Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."—*Ecclesiastes* vi. 4, 5.

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